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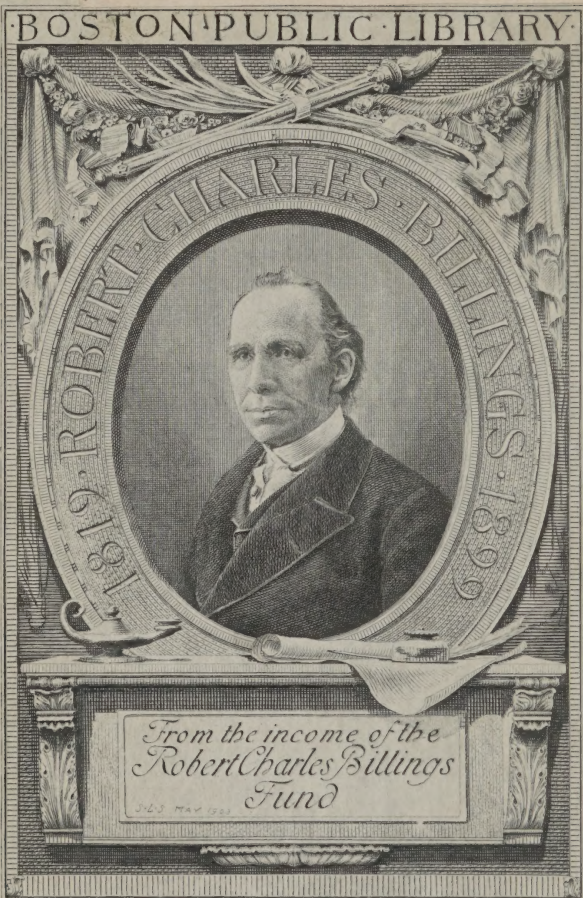
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VOLUME XIII.

MDCCCCVII.

The BiBelot

A Reprint of Poetry
and Prose for Book
Lovers, chosen in part
from scarce editions and
sources not generally
known

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and Publish'd by him at 45 Ex-
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VOLUME XIII

Portland, Maine
THOMAS B. MOSHER
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The Bibelot

TO open the new year and a new volume of *The Bibelot* with what may justly be called Shelley's masterpiece in prose would seem especially desirable and "timely" in view of the movement for establishing in Rome a permanent "Keats-Shelley Memorial"; a movement in whose behalf we invite the coöperation of all Bibelot subscribers present and to come.

Those who have read Browning's *Essay*, (given by us in Vol. VIII, pp. 45-79.) scarcely need the reminder of how intimately allied in literary interest are both *Essay* and *Defence*. And if, as stated by Prof. Dowden, the *Defence* "possesses much autobiographical importance as an undesigned exposition of the processes of the mind of Shelley as a creator and an artist,"¹ we have a further and final suggestion as to the new light to be thrown on the mental makeup of both poets by a comparative study of their two professions of the poetic faith that was in them.

¹ See *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. By Edward Dowden. (2 vols. 8vo. London, 1887.) Vol. II, p. 386.

That A Defence of Poetry "is one of the most beautiful prose-pieces in the language" and "in serene elevation of tone, and expanse and subtlety of thought is worthy of Plato or Emerson," was the opinion of one of the most self-contained critics the text of Shelley ever had.¹ It has also come to be the opinion of others who are familiar not only with Sidney's precedent Defence of Poesy,² but with Peacock's Four Ages of Poetry, the proximate cause of Shelley's impassioned outburst.

A Defence of Poetry as will be seen was written as long ago as February and March, 1821, but remained in MS. until after the poet's death, being first printed under Mrs. Shelley's editorship in 1840. What the mere commercial value of its author's name and fame has at last become is revealed in such "a modern instance" as the recent sale of the three manuscript note books of Shelley owned by the late Dr. Richard Garnett for the amazing sum of £3,000.

¹ See *SHELLEY, a Poem: with other Writings relating to Shelley*, by the late JAMES THOMSON ('B. v.'), to which is added an *Essay on the Poems of WILLIAM BLAKE*, by the same Author. London, Printed for Private Circulation, 1884. (190 copies, 8vo. Pp. xii: 128.)

² *Which we hope to reprint later on.*

The text chosen for our reprint is that adopted by H. Buxton Forman in his édition definitive¹ and includes his lengthy prefatory note and annotations as well as a few minor notes made by us where deemed needful.

¹ The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Edited by Harry Buxton Forman. In four volumes. [Octavo.] London: Reeves and Turner. 196 Strand. 1880. Vol. III. Pp. 97-144. Peacock's Essay is given in the Appendix to Shelley's Prose, Vol. III, pp. 386. It has also been reprinted in Prof. Albert S. Cook's edition of the Defence. (Boston, 1890.) Pp. 47-61.

FOR FEBRUARY :
A DEFENCE OF POETRY
(Concluded.)

FOR MARCH :
THE SEVEN GOLDEN ODES OF
JOHN KEATS.

THE CENTENARY OF SHELLEY.

*Now a hundred years ago among us came
Down from some diviner sphere of purer flame,
Clothed in flesh to suffer, maimed of wings to soar,
One whom hate once bailed as now love hails by name,
Chosen of love as chosen of hatred. Now no more
Ear of man may hear or heart of man deplore
Aught of dissonance or doubt that mars the strain
Raised at last of love where love sat mute of yore.*

*Fame is less than love, and loss is more than gain,
When the sweetest souls and strongest, fallen in fight,
Slain and stricken as it seemed in base men's sight,
Rise and lighten on the graves of foeman slain,
Clothed about with love of all men as with light,
Suns that set not, stars that know not day from night.*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

July 22, 1892.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY
By
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

COR CORDIUM.

*O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom ;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre ;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir ;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

“FOR the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired, and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him ; when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless, and is unable to utter his oracles. . . . Had he learned by rules of art, he would have known how to speak, not of one theme only, but of all ; and, therefore, God takes away the mind of poets, and uses them as His ministers, as He also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know that they speak not of themselves, who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God is the speaker, and that through them He is conversing with us.”

THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO : *Ion*.

(*Jowett's translation.*)

“ But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, and comes to the door, and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry, are not admitted ; the sane man is nowhere at all, when he enters into the rivalry with madmen.”

THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO : *Phædrus*.

(*Jowett's translation.*)

PREFACE.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY is the first part of an essay meant as an answer to one by Thomas Love Peacock, which appeared in 1820 in Ollier's Literary Miscellany, where also Shelley's Defence was to have appeared had the magazine been continued. Mrs. Shelley, when first giving the Defence of Poetry to the world in the Essays &c. (1840), characterized it in her Preface (page vii) as "the only entirely finished prose work Shelley left." The Defence was written shortly after Epipsychidion. Writing to Mr. Ollier on the 20th of January, 1821, Shelley says (Shelley Memorials, where the letter is given at pages 135-6, but dated 1820), "the moment I get rid of my ophthalmia, I mean to see about an answer to" The Four Ages of Poetry: he adds "It is very clever, but, I think, very false." Writing again on the 22nd of February, 1821, he says (Shelley Memorials, page 154), "Peacock's essay is at Florence at present,—I have sent for it and will transmit to you my paper as soon as it is written which will be in a very few days. Nevertheless, I should be sorry that you delayed your Magazine through any dependence on me.—I will not accept anything for this

paper, as I had determined to write it, and promised it you, before, I heard of your liberal arrangements . . .” In a letter dated the 20th or 22nd of March, 1821, he says, “I send you the Defence of Poetry, Part 1.—It is transcribed, I hope, legibly”; and he gives Mr. Ollier leave to omit, but not to “alter or add.” In a postscript he requests that a copy of the Magazine containing the Defence may be sent to Peacock as from him. In a letter to Peacock dated the 21st of March, 1821 (Fraser’s Magazine, March, 1860, page 315), he says “I dispatch by this post the first part of an essay, intended to consist of three parts, which I design for an antidote to your Four Ages of Poetry”; and Peacock says in a note that, as Shelley wrote it, “it contained many allusions to the article and its author, such as ‘If I know the knight by the device of his shield, I have only to inscribe Cassandra, Antigone, or Alcestis on mine to blunt the point of his spear;’ taking one instance of a favourite character from each of the three great Greek tragedians. All these allusions were struck out by Mr. John Hunt when he prepared the paper for publication in the Liberal. The demise of that periodical prevented the publica-

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tion, and Mrs. Shelley subsequently printed it from Mr. Hunt's *rifacciamento*, as she received it. The paper as it now stands is a defence without an attack. Shelley intended this paper to be in three parts, but the other two were not written." I am not aware how the paper passed from Mr. Ollier to Mr. Hunt. In a letter to Mr. Ollier dated the 25th of September, 1821 (Shelley Memorials, page 159), Shelley says, "Pray give me notice against what time you want the second part of my Defence of Poetry—I give you this Defence, and you may do what you will with it." Mr. Garnett (*Relics*, page 48) mentions as existing among Shelley's MSS. a fair copy of this essay, prepared for the printer, but damaged by sea-water,—so much so, Mr. Garnett tells me, that only a word here and there can be deciphered. The publication in the *Relics* of some passages from the "original exordium" seems to indicate the existence of some of Shelley's notes, or parts of the draft. I have a complete MS. of it in the handwriting of Miss Clairmont; but, though it presents some variations from the printed text, it would seem to be copied, not from the original, but from the *rifacciamento*. In the MS. Note-book, however, containing the Notes

PREFACE

on Sculpture, &c., is a fragment of the original Defence, including one of the cancelled references to The Four Ages. For the following text I have collated the editions of 1840 and 1852, and Miss Clairmont's transcript, — all three representing the same original, and have as a rule silently adopted the best reading in each case. The variations are usually of too slight and accidental a character to record. . . .

H. B. F.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY.¹

PART I.

ACCORDING to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced; and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is the *τὸ ποιεῖν*, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its object those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the *τὸ λογίζειν*, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things, simply as relations; considering thoughts, not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole.

Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.

Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be "the expression of the imagination:" and poetry is connate with the origin of man. Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Æolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in a lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre. A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflexion of tone

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

and every gesture will bear exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind has died away, so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause. In relation to the objects which delight a child, these expressions are what poetry is to higher objects. The savage (for the savage is to ages what the child is to years) expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects in a similar manner; and language and gesture, together with plastic or pictorial imitation, become the image of the combined effect of those objects and his apprehension of them. Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man; an additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expression; and language, gesture, and the imitative arts, become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statue, the

chord and the harmony. The social sympathies, or those laws from which as from its elements society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist; the future is contained within the present as the plant within the seed; and equality, diversity, unity, contrast, mutual dependence, become the principles alone capable of affording the motives according to which the will of a social being is determined to action, inasmuch as he is social; and constitute pleasure in sensation, virtue in sentiment, beauty in art, truth in reasoning, and love in the intercourse of kind. Hence men, even in the infancy of society, observe a certain order in their words and actions, distinct from that of the objects and the impressions represented by them, all expression being subject to the laws of that from which it proceeds. But let us dismiss those more general considerations which might involve an inquiry into the principles of society itself, and restrict our view to the manner in which the imagination is expressed upon its forms.

In the youth of the world, men dance and

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers. Every man in the infancy of art, observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results: but the diversity is not sufficiently marked, as that its gradations should be sensible, except in those instances where the predominance of this faculty of approximation to the beautiful (for so we may be permitted to name the relation between this highest pleasure and its cause) is very great. Those in whom it exists to excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word; and the pleasure

resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from the community. Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension, until words, which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thought, instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. These similitudes or relations are finely said by Lord Bacon to be "the same footsteps of nature impressed upon the various subjects of the world"²—and he considers the faculty which perceives them as the storehouse of axioms common to all knowledge. In the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation subsisting, first between existence

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and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem: the copiousness of lexicography and the distinctions of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the forms of the creations of poetry.

But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. Hence all original religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and like Janus have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters.

For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. Not that I assert poets to be prophets in the gross sense of the word, or that they can foretell the form as surely as they foreknow the spirit of events: such is the pretence of superstition, which would make poetry an attribute of prophecy, rather than prophecy an attribute of poetry. A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons, and the distinction of place, are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry; and the choruses of *Æschylus*, and the book of *Job*, and *Dante's Paradise*, would afford, more than any other writings, examples of this fact, if the limits of this essay did not forbid citation. The creations of music, sculpture, and painting, are illustrations still more decisive.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

Language, colour, form, and religious and civil habits of action, are all the instruments and materials of poetry; they may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonyme of the cause. But poetry in a more restricted sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty, whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations, than colour, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the controul of that faculty of which it is the creation. For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is as a mirror which reflects, the latter as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are

mediums of communication. Hence the fame of sculptors, painters, and musicians, although the intrinsic powers of the great masters of these arts may yield in no degree to that of those who have employed language as the hieroglyphic of their thoughts, has never equalled that of poets in the restricted sense of the term; as two performers of equal skill will produce unequal effects from a guitar and a harp. The fame of legislators and founders of religions, so long as their institutions last, alone seems to exceed that of poets in the restricted sense; but it can scarcely be a question, whether, if we deduct the celebrity which their flattery of the gross opinions of the vulgar usually conciliates, together with that which belonged to them in their higher character of poets, any excess will remain.

We have thus circumscribed the word poetry within the limits of that art which is the most familiar and the most perfect expression of the faculty itself. It is necessary, however, to make the circle still narrower, and to determine the distinction between measured and unmeasured language; for the popular division into prose

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and verse is inadmissible in accurate philosophy.

Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thought. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a sort of uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principles of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.

An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain

system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed. The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred especially in such composition as includes much action : but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification. The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error. The distinction between philosophers and poets has been anticipated. Plato was essentially a poet — the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive. He rejected the harmony⁴ of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forbore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style. Cicero sought to imitate the cadence of his periods, but with little success. Lord Bacon was a poet.⁵ His

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy. All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form. Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power.

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference

between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause, and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole, though it may be found in the midst of a series of unassimilated portions; a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy, were poets; and although the plan of these writers, especially that of Livy, restrained them from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they made copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images.

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellency of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to

contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendour of their union. Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impannelled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece; they were the elements of that social system which is the column upon which all succeeding civilization has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character; nor can we doubt that those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses: the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to their depths in

these immortal creations: the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations, until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of their admiration. Nor let it be objected, that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they are by no means to be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch, under names more or less specious, has deified its peculiar errors; Revenge is the naked idol of the worship of a semibarbarous age; and Self-deceit is the veiled image of unknown evil, before which luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as the temporary dress in which his creations must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An epic or dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the ancient armour or modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far con-

cealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, &c., be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, of the immorality of poetry rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY

Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new inter-

vals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.⁶ A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in the participation of the cause. There was little danger that Homer, or any of the eternal poets, should have so far misunderstood themselves as to have abdicated this throne of their widest dominion. Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose.

Homer and the cyclic poets were followed at a certain interval by the dramatic and lyrical poets of Athens, who flourished con-

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temporaneously with all that is most perfect in the kindred expressions of the poetical faculty; architecture, painting, music, the dance, sculpture, philosophy, and we may add, the forms of civil life. For although the scheme of Athenian society was deformed by many imperfections which the poetry existing in chivalry and Christianity has erased from the habits and institutions of modern Europe; yet never at any other period has so much energy, beauty and virtue, been developed; never was blind strength and stubborn form so disciplined and rendered subject to the will of man, or that will less repugnant to the dictates of the beautiful and the true, as during the century which preceded the death of Socrates. Of no other epoch in the history of our species have we records and fragments stamped so visibly with the image of the divinity in man. But it is poetry alone, in form, in action, and in language, which has rendered this epoch memorable above all others, and the storehouse of examples to everlasting time. For written poetry existed at that epoch simultaneously with the other arts, and it is an idle inquiry to demand which

gave and which received the light, which all, as from a common focus, have scattered over the darkest periods of succeeding time. We know no more of cause and effect than a constant conjunction of events: poetry is ever found to coexist with whatever other arts contribute to the happiness and perfection of man. I appeal to what has already been established to distinguish between the cause and the effect.

It was at the period here adverted to, that the drama had its birth; and however a succeeding writer may have equalled or surpassed those few great specimens of the Athenian drama which have been preserved to us, it is indisputable that the art itself never was understood or practised according to the true philosophy of it, as at Athens. For the Athenians employed language, action, music, painting, the dance, and religious institution, to produce a common effect in the representation of the highest idealisms of passion and of power; each division in the art was made perfect in its kind by artists of the most consummate skill, and was disciplined into a beautiful proportion and unity one towards the other.

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On the modern stage a few only of the elements capable of expressing the image of the poet's conception are employed at once. We have tragedy without music and dancing, and music and dancing without the highest impersonations of which they are the fit accompaniment, and both without religion and solemnity. Religious institution has indeed been usually banished from the stage. Our system of divesting the actor's face of a mask, on which the many expressions appropriated to his dramatic character might be moulded into one permanent and unchanging expression, is favourable only to a partial and inharmonious effect; it is fit for nothing but a monologue, where all the attention may be directed to some great master of ideal mimicry. The modern practice of blending comedy with tragedy, though liable to great abuse in point of practice, is undoubtedly an extension of the dramatic circle; but the comedy should be as in *King Lear*, universal, ideal, and sublime. It is perhaps the intervention of this principle which determines the balance in favour of *King Lear* against the *Œdipus Tyrannus* or the

Agamemnon, or, if you will, the trilogies with which they are connected; unless the intense power of the choral poetry, especially that of the latter, should be considered as restoring the equilibrium. King Lear, if it can sustain this comparison, may be judged to be the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world; in spite of the narrow conditions to which the poet was subjected by the ignorance of the philosophy of the drama which has prevailed in modern Europe. Calderon, in his religious Autos, has attempted to fulfil some of the high conditions of dramatic representation neglected by Shakespeare; such as the establishing a relation between the drama and religion, and the accommodating them to music and dancing; but he omits the observation of conditions still more important, and more is lost than gained by the substitution of the rigidly-defined and ever-repeated idealisms of a distorted superstition for the living impersonations of the truth of human passion.

But I digress.—The connexion of scenic exhibitions with the improvement or corruption of the manners of men, has been

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universally recognized: in other words, the presence or absence of poetry in its most perfect and universal form, has been found to be connected with good and evil in conduct or habit. The corruption which has been imputed to the drama as an effect, begins, when the poetry employed in its constitution ends: I appeal to the history of manners whether the periods of the growth of the one and the decline of the other have not corresponded with an exactness equal to any example of moral cause and effect.

The drama at Athens, or wheresoever else it may have approached to its perfection, ever coexisted with the moral and intellectual greatness of the age. The tragedies of the Athenian poets are as mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stript of all but that ideal perfection and energy which every one feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires, and would become. The imagination is enlarged by a sympathy with pains and passions so mighty, that they distend in their conception the capacity of that by

which they are conceived; the good affections are strengthened by pity, indignation, terror and sorrow; and an exalted calm is prolonged from the satiety of this high exercise of them into the tumult of familiar life: even crime is disarmed of half its horror and all its contagion by being represented as the fatal consequence of the unfathomable agencies of nature; error is thus divested of its wilfulness; men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice. In the drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect. Neither the eye nor the mind can see itself, unless reflected upon that which it resembles. The drama, so long as it continues to express poetry, is a prismatic and many-sided mirror, which collects the brightest rays of human nature and divides and reproduces them from the simplicity of their elementary forms, and touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects, and endows it with the power of propagating its like wherever it may fall.

But in periods of the decay of social life,

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the drama sympathizes with that decay. Tragedy becomes a cold imitation of the forms of the great masterpieces of antiquity, divested of all harmonious accompaniment of the kindred arts ; and often the very form misunderstood, or a weak attempt to teach certain doctrines, which the writer considers as moral truths, and which are usually no more than specious flatteries of some gross vice or weakness, with which the author, in common with his auditors, are infected. Hence what has been called the classical and domestic drama. Addison's "Cato" is a specimen of the one ; and would it were not superfluous to cite examples of the other ! To such purposes poetry cannot be made subservient. Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it. And hence we observe that all dramatic writings of this nature are unimaginative in a singular degree ; they affect sentiment and passion, which, divested of imagination, are other names for caprice and appetite. The period in our own history of the grossest degradation of the drama is the reign of Charles II., when all forms in which poetry had been

accustomed to be expressed became hymns to the triumph of kingly power over liberty and virtue. Milton stood alone illuminating an age unworthy of him. At such periods the calculating principle pervades all the forms of dramatic exhibition, and poetry ceases to be expressed upon them. Comedy loses its ideal universality: wit succeeds to humour; we laugh from self-complacency and triumph, instead of pleasure; malignity, sarcasm, and contempt, succeed to sympathetic merriment; we hardly laugh, but we smile. Obscenity, which is ever blasphemy against the divine beauty in life, becomes, from the very veil which it assumes, more active if less disgusting: it is a monster for which the corruption of society for ever brings forth new food, which it devours in secret.

The drama being that form under which a greater number of modes of expression of poetry are susceptible of being combined than any other, the connexion of poetry and social good is more observable in the drama than in whatever other form. And it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with

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the highest dramatic excellence; and that the corruption or the extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished, is a mark of a corruption of manners, and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life. But, as Machiavelli says of political institutions, that life may be preserved and renewed, if men should arise capable of bringing back the drama to its principles. And this is true with respect to poetry in its most extended sense: all language, institution and form, require not only to be produced but to be sustained: the office and character of a poet participates in the divine nature as regards providence, no less than as regards creation.

Civil war, the spoils of Asia, and the fatal predominance first of the Macedonian, and then of the Roman arms, were so many symbols of the extinction or suspension of the creative faculty in Greece. The bucolic writers, who found patronage under the lettered tyrants of Sicily and Egypt, were the latest representatives of its most glorious reign. Their poetry is intensely melodious; like the odour of the tuberose, it overcomes

and sickens the spirit with excess of sweetness; whilst the poetry of the preceding age was as a meadow-gale of June, which mingles the fragrance of all the flowers of the field, and adds a quickening and harmonizing spirit of its own which endows the sense with a power of sustaining its extreme delight. The bucolic and erotic delicacy in written poetry is correlative with that softness in statuary, music, and the kindred arts, and even in manners and institutions, which distinguished the epoch to which I now refer. Nor is it the poetical faculty itself, or any misapplication of it, to which this want of harmony is to be imputed. An equal sensibility to the influence of the senses and the affections is to be found in the writings of Homer and Sophocles: the former, especially, has clothed sensual and pathetic images with irresistible attractions. Their superiority over these succeeding writers consists in the presence of those thoughts which belong to the inner faculties of our nature, not in the absence of those which are connected with the external: their incomparable perfection consists in an harmony of the union of all. It is not what

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the erotic poets have, but what they have not, in which their imperfection consists. It is not inasmuch as they were poets, but inasmuch as they were not poets, that they can be considered with any plausibility as connected with the corruption of their age. Had that corruption availed so as to extinguish in them the sensibility to pleasure, passion, and natural scenery, which is imputed to them as an imperfection, the last triumph of evil would have been achieved. For the end of social corruption is to destroy all sensibility to pleasure; and therefore it is corruption. It begins at the imagination and the intellect as at the core, and distributes itself thence as a paralysing venom, through the affections into the very appetites, until all become a torpid mass in which hardly sense survives. At the approach of such a period, poetry ever addresses itself to those faculties which are the last to be destroyed, and its voice is heard, like the footsteps of Astræa, departing from the world. Poetry ever communicates all the pleasure which men are capable of receiving: it is ever still the light of life; the source of whatever of beautiful or gen-

erous or true can have place in an evil time. It will readily be confessed that those among the luxurious citizens of Syracuse and Alexandria who were delighted with the poems of Theocritus, were less cold, cruel, and sensual than the remnant of their tribe. But corruption must utterly have destroyed the fabric of human society before poetry can ever cease. The sacred links of that chain have never been entirely disjoined, which descending through the minds of many men, is attached to those great minds, whence as from a magnet the invisible effluence is sent forth; which at once connects, animates, and sustains the life of all.⁸ It is the faculty which contains within itself the seeds at once of its own and of social renovation. And let us not circumscribe the effects of the bucolic and erotic poetry within the limits of the sensibility of those to whom it was addressed. They may have perceived the beauty of those immortal compositions, simply as fragments and isolated portions: those who are more finely organized, or born in an happier age, may recognize them as episodes to that great poem, which all poets, like the

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co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world.

The same revolution within a narrower sphere had place in ancient Rome; but the actions and forms of its social life never seem to have been perfectly saturated with the poetical element. The Romans appear to have considered the Greeks as the selectest treasures of the selectest forms of manners and of nature, and to have abstained from creating in measured language, sculpture, music, or architecture, any thing which might bear a particular relation to their own condition, whilst it should bear a general one to the universal constitution of the world. But we judge from partial evidence, and we judge perhaps partially. Ennius, Varro, Pacuvius, and Accius, all great poets, have been lost. Lucretius is in the highest, and Virgil in a very high sense, a creator. The chosen delicacy of expressions of the latter, are as a mist of light which conceal from us the intense and exceeding truth of his conceptions of nature. Livy is instinct with poetry. Yet Horace, Catullus, Ovid, and generally

the other great writers of the Virgilian age, saw man and nature in the mirror of Greece. The institutions also, and the religion of Rome, were less poetical than those of Greece, as the shadow is less vivid than the substance. Hence poetry in Rome, seemed to follow, rather than accompany, the perfection of political and domestic society. The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions; for whatever of beautiful, of true and majestic, they contained, could have sprung only from the faculty which creates the order in which they consist. The life of Camillus, the death of Regulus; the expectation of the senators, in their godlike state, of the victorious Gauls; the refusal of the republic to make peace with Hannibal after the battle of Cannæ, were not the consequences of a refined calculation of the probable personal advantage to result from such a rhythm and order in the shows of life, to those who were at once the poets and the actors of these immortal dramas. The imagination beholding the beauty of this order, created it out of itself according to its own idea; the consequence was empire, and the reward everlasting fame.

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These things are not the less poetry, *quia carent vate sacro*. They are the episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of men. The Past, like an inspired rhapsodist, fills the theatre of everlasting generations with their harmony.

At length the ancient system of religion and manners had fulfilled the circle of its evolutions. And the world would have fallen into utter anarchy and darkness, but that there were found poets among the authors of the Christian and chivalric systems of manners and religion, who created forms of opinion and action never before conceived; which, copied into the imaginations of men, became as generals to the bewildered armies of their thoughts. It is foreign to the present purpose to touch upon the evil produced by these systems: except that we protest, on the ground of the principles already established, that no portion of it can be attributed to the poetry they contain.

It is probable that the poetry of Moses, Job, David, Solomon, and Isaiah, had produced a great effect upon the mind of Jesus and his disciples. The scattered fragments

preserved to us by the biographers of this extraordinary person, are all instinct with the most vivid poetry. But his doctrines seem to have been quickly distorted. At a certain period after the prevalence of a system of opinions founded upon those promulgated by him, the three forms into which Plato had distributed the faculties of mind underwent a sort of apotheosis, and became the object of the worship of the civilized world. Here it is to be confessed that "Light" seems to "thicken,"

And the crow makes wing to the rooky wood ;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse ;
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse. 9

But mark how beautiful an order has sprung from the dust and blood of this fierce chaos ! how the world, as from a resurrection, balancing itself on the golden wings of knowledge and of hope, has reassumed its yet unwearied flight into the heaven of time. Listen to the music, unheard by outward ears, which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind, nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness.

The poetry in the doctrines of Jesus

Christ, and the mythology and institutions of the Celtic conquerors of the Roman empire, outlived the darkness and the convulsions connected with their growth and victory, and blended themselves in a new fabric of manners and opinion. It is an error to impute the ignorance of the dark ages to the Christian doctrines or the predominance of the Celtic nations. Whatever of evil their agencies may have contained sprang from the extinction of the poetical principle, connected with the progress of despotism and superstition. Men, from causes too intricate to be here discussed, had become insensible and selfish: their own will had become feeble, and yet they were its slaves, and thence the slaves of the will of others: lust, fear, avarice, cruelty, and fraud, characterized a race amongst whom no one was to be found capable of *creating* in form, language, or institution. The moral anomalies of such a state of society are not justly to be charged upon any class of events immediately connected with them, and those events are most entitled to our approbation which could dissolve it most expeditiously. It is unfor-

tunate for those who cannot distinguish words from thoughts, that many of these anomalies have been incorporated into our popular religion.

It was not until the eleventh century that the effects of the poetry of the Christian and chivalric systems began to manifest themselves. The principle of equality had been discovered and applied by Plato in his Republic, as the theoretical rule of the mode in which the materials of pleasure and of power produced by the common skill and labour of human beings ought to be distributed among them. The limitations of this rule were asserted by him to be determined only by the sensibility of each, or the utility to result to all. Plato, following the doctrines of Timæus and Pythagoras, taught also a moral and intellectual system of doctrine, comprehending at once the past, the present, and the future condition of man. Jesus Christ divulged the sacred and eternal truths contained in these views to mankind, and Christianity, in its abstract purity, became the exoteric expression of the esoteric doctrines of the poetry and wisdom of antiquity. The incorporation of

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the Celtic nations with the exhausted population of the south, impressed upon it the figure of the poetry existing in their mythology and institutions. The result was a sum of the action and reaction of all the causes included in it; for it may be assumed as a maxim that no nation or religion can supersede any other without incorporating into itself a portion of that which it supersedes. The abolition of personal and domestic slavery, and the emancipation of women from a great part of the degrading restraints of antiquity, were among the consequences of these events.

The abolition of personal slavery is the basis of the highest political hope that it can enter into the mind of man to conceive. The freedom of women produced the poetry of sexual love. Love became a religion, the idols of whose worship were ever present. It was as if the statues of Apollo and the Muses had been endowed with life and motion, and had walked forth among their worshippers; so that earth became peopled by the inhabitants of a diviner world. The familiar appearances and proceedings of life became wonderful and heavenly, and a

paradise was created as out of the wrecks of Eden. And as this creation itself is poetry, so its creators were poets; and language was the instrument of their art: "Galeotto fù il libro, e chi lo scrisse." The Provençal Trouveurs, or inventors, preceded Petrarch, whose verses are as spells, which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of love. It is impossible to feel them without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate: it were superfluous to explain how the gentleness and elevation of mind connected with these sacred emotions can render men more amiable, more generous and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapours of the little world of self. Dante understood the secret things of love even more than Petrarch. His *Vita Nuova* is an inexhaustible fountain of purity of sentiment and language: it is the idealized history of that period, and those intervals of his life which were dedicated to love. His apotheosis of Beatrice in Paradise, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to

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the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry. The acutest critics have justly reversed the judgment of the vulgar, and the order of the great acts of the *Divina Commedia*,¹⁰ in the measure of the admiration which they accord to the Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The latter is a perpetual hymn of everlasting love. Love, which found a worthy poet in Plato alone of all the ancients, has been celebrated by a chorus of the greatest writers of the renovated world; and the music has penetrated the caverns of society, and its echoes still drown the dissonance of arms and superstition. At successive intervals, Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, Spenser, Calderon, Rousseau, and the great writers of our own age, have celebrated the dominion of love, planting as it were trophies in the human mind of that sublimest victory over sensuality and force. The true relation borne to each other by the sexes into which human kind is distributed, has become less misunderstood; and if the error which confounded diversity with inequality of the powers of the two sexes has been partially recognized in the opinions and institutions

of modern Europe, we owe this great benefit to the worship of which chivalry was the law, and poets the prophets.

The poetry of Dante may be considered as the bridge thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and ancient world. The distorted notions of invisible things which Dante and his rival Milton have idealized, are merely the mask and the mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised. It is a difficult question to determine how far they were conscious of the distinction which must have subsisted in their minds between their own creeds and that of the people. Dante at least appears to wish to mark the full extent of it by placing Riphæus, whom Virgil calls *justissimus unus*, in Paradise, and observing a most heretical¹¹ caprice in his distribution of rewards and punishments. And Milton's poem contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that system of which, by a strange and natural antithesis, it has been a chief popular support.¹² Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost*. It is a

mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremest anguish on an enemy, these things are evil; and, although venial in a slave, are not to be forgiven in a tyrant; although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeat in one subdued, are marked by all that dishonours his conquest in the victor. Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments. Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his god over his devil. And this bold neglect of a direct moral purpose is the most decisive proof of the

supremacy of Milton's genius. He mingled as it were the elements of human nature as colours upon a single pallet, and arranged them in the composition of his great picture according to the laws of epic truth, that is, according to the laws of that principle by which a series of actions of the external universe and of intelligent and ethical beings is calculated to excite the sympathy of succeeding generations of mankind. The *Divina Commedia* and *Paradise Lost* have conferred upon modern mythology a systematic form; and when change and time shall have added one more superstition to the mass of those which have arisen and decayed upon the earth, commentators will be learnedly employed in elucidating the religion of ancestral Europe, only not utterly forgotten because it will have been stamped with the eternity of genius.

Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet: that is, the second poet, the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it: developing itself in correspondence with their

developement. For Lucretius had limed the wings of his swift spirit in the dregs of the sensible world; and Virgil, with a modesty that ill became his genius, had affected the fame of an imitator, even whilst he created anew all that he copied; and none among the flock of mock-birds, though their notes are sweet, Apollonius Rhodius, Quintus Calaber, Smyrnæus, Nonnus, Lucan, Statius, or Claudian, have sought even to fulfil a single condition of epic truth. Milton was the third epic poet. For if the title of epic in its highest sense be refused to the *Æneid*, still less can it be conceded to the *Orlando Furioso*, the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the *Lusiad*, or the *Fairy Queen*.

Dante and Milton were both deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilized world; and its spirit exists in their poetry probably in the same proportion as its forms survived in the unreformed worship of modern Europe. The one preceded and the other followed the Reformation at almost equal intervals. Dante was the first religious reformer, and Luther surpassed him rather in the rudeness and acrimony, than in the boldness of his censures, of

papal usurpation. Dante was the first awakener of entranced Europe; he created a language, in itself music and persuasion, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms. He was the congregator of those great spirits who presided over the resurrection of learning; the Lucifer of that starry flock which in the thirteenth century shone forth from republican Italy, as from a heaven, into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with the lightning which has yet found no conductor. All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain for ever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the

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source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight.

The age immediately succeeding to that of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, was characterized by a revival of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Chaucer caught the sacred inspiration, and the superstructure of English literature is based upon the materials of Italian invention.

But let us not be betrayed from a defence into a critical history of poetry and its influence on society. Be it enough to have pointed out the effects of poets, in the large and true sense of the word, upon their own and all succeeding times.

But poets have been challenged to resign the civic crown to reasoners and mechanists, on another plea. It is admitted that the exercise of the imagination is most delightful, but it is alleged that that of reason is more useful. Let us examine, as the grounds of this distinction, what is here meant by utility. Pleasure or good, in a general sense, is that which the consciousness of a sensitive and intelligent being seeks, and in which, when found, it acquiesces. There are two kinds of pleasure, one durable,

universal and permanent; the other transitory and particular. Utility may either express the means of producing the former or the latter. In the former sense, whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful. But a narrower meaning may be assigned to the word utility, confining it to express that which banishes the importunity of the wants of our animal nature, the surrounding men with the security of life, the dispersing the grosser delusions of superstition, and the conciliating such a degree of mutual forbearance among men as may consist with the motives of personal advantage.

Undoubtedly the promoters of utility, in this limited sense, have their appointed office in society. They follow the footsteps of poets, and copy the sketches of their creations into the book of common life. They make space, and give time. Their exertions are of the highest value, so long as they confine their administration of the concerns of the inferior powers of our nature within the limits due to the superior ones. But whilst the sceptic destroys gross

superstitions, let him spare to deface, as some of the French writers have defaced, the eternal truths charactered upon the imaginations of men. Whilst the mechanist abridges, and the political economist combines labour, let them beware that their speculations, for want of correspondence with those first principles which belong to the imagination, do not tend, as they have in modern England, to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and of want. They have exemplified the saying, "To him that hath, more shall be given; and from him that hath not, the little that he hath shall be taken away." The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer; and the vessel of the state is driven between the Scylla and Charybdis of anarchy and despotism. Such are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty.

It is difficult to define pleasure in its highest sense; the definition involving a number of apparent paradoxes. For, from an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the

pleasures of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair itself, are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of that pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. And hence the saying, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of mirth." Not that this highest species of pleasure is necessarily linked with pain. The delight of love and friendship, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of poetry, is often wholly unalloyed.

The production and assurance of pleasure in this highest sense is true utility. Those who produce and preserve this pleasure are poets or poetical philosophers.

The exertions of Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau,¹⁴ and their disciples, in favour of oppressed and deluded humanity, are entitled to the gratitude of mankind.

Yet it is easy to calculate the degree of moral and intellectual improvement which the world would have exhibited, had they never lived. A little more nonsense would have been talked for a century or two; and perhaps a few more men, women, and children, burnt as heretics. We might not at this moment have been congratulating each other on the abolition of the Inquisition in Spain. But it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if neither Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Calderon, Lord Bacon, nor Milton, had ever existed; if Raphael and Michael Angelo¹⁵ had never been born; if the Hebrew poetry had never been translated; if a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief. The human mind could never, except by the intervention of these excitements, have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of

society, which it is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself.

We have more moral, political, and historical wisdom, than we know how to reduce into practice ; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies. The poetry, in these systems of thought, is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes. There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government, and political economy, or at least what is wiser and better than what men now practise and endure. But we let "*I dare not wait upon I would*, like the poor cat in the adage."¹⁶ We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know ; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine ; we want the poetry of life : our calculations have outrun conception ; we have eaten more than we can digest. The cultivation of those sciences which^a have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally

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circumscribed those of the internal world ; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind ? From what other cause has it arisen that the discoveries which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam ? Poetry, and the principle of Self of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world.

The functions of the poetical faculty are twofold ; by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure ; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order, which may be called the beautiful and the good. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials

of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship,—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our

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aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by

labour and study.* The toil and the delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connexion of the spaces between their suggestions, by the intertexture of conventional expressions; a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself: for Milton conceived the *Paradise Lost* as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song." And let this be an answer to those who would allege the fifty-six various readings of the first line of the *Orlando Furioso*. Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. The instinct

* [This statement has been challenged by Professor Saintsbury. "There is an obvious fallacy here. The finest passages are not originally inspired by labour and study, but in their finest shape they are the result of labour and study spent on the immediate result of inspiration. Shelley speaks as if the first proposition, which is true, involved the second, which is false." See *Specimens of English Prose Style*, edited by George Saintsbury. 8vo. London, 1885. P. 346. ED. THE BIBELLOT.]

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and intuition of the poetical faculty is still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts : a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb ; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation, is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process.

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling, sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression : so that even in the desire and the regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own ; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the morning¹⁷ calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most

delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship, is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this æthereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems

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from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union, under its light yoke, all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes: its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

All things exist as they are perceived; at least in relation to the percipient.

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n. 18

But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads

its own figured curtain, or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitant of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. It justifies the bold and true word of Tasso: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta*.¹⁹

A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men. As to his glory, let time be challenged to declare whether the fame of any other institutor of human life be comparable to that of a poet. That he is the wisest, the happiest, and the best, inasmuch as he is a poet, is equally incon-

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trovertible : the greatest poets have been men of the most spotless virtue, of the most consummate prudence, and, if we would look into the interior of their lives, the most fortunate of men : and the exceptions, as they regard those who possessed the poetic faculty in a high yet inferior degree, will be found on consideration to confirm²⁰ rather than destroy the rule. Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration of popular breath, and usurping and uniting in our own persons the incompatible characters of accuser, witness, judge and executioner, let us decide without trial, testimony, or form, that certain motives of those who are "there sitting where we dare not soar," are reprehensible. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman, that Lord Bacon was a peculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate. It is inconsistent with this division of our subject to cite living poets, but posterity has done ample justice to the great names now referred to. Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance ; if their sins

“were as scarlet, they are now white as snow:” they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time. Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputations of real or fictitious crime have been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets; consider how little is as it appears—or appears as it is; look to your own motives, and judge not, lest ye be judged.

Poetry, as has been said, differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the controul of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connexion with the consciousness or will. It is presumptuous to determine that these are the necessary conditions of all mental causation, when mental effects are experienced insusceptible of being referred to them. The frequent recurrence of the poetical power, it is obvious to suppose, may produce in the mind an habit of order and harmony correlative with its own nature and with its effects upon other minds. But in the intervals of inspiration, and they may be frequent without being durable, a poet becomes a man, and is

abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live. But as he is more delicately organized than other men, and sensible to pain and pleasure, both his own and that of others, in a degree unknown to them, he will avoid the one and pursue the other with an ardour proportioned to this difference. And he renders himself obnoxious to calumny, when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments.

But there is nothing necessarily evil in this error, and thus cruelty, envy, revenge, avarice, and the passions purely evil, have never formed any portion of the popular imputations on the lives of poets.

I have thought it most favourable to the cause of truth to set down these remarks according to the order in which they were suggested to my mind, by a consideration of the subject itself, instead of observing the formality of a polemical reply; but if the view which they contain be just, they will be found to involve a refutation of the arguers against poetry, so far at least as

regards the first division of the subject. I can readily conjecture what should have moved the gall of some learned and intelligent writers who quarrel with certain versifiers; I, like them, confess myself unwilling to be stunned by the Theseids of the hoarse Codri of the day. Bavius and Mævius undoubtedly are, as they ever were, insufferable persons. But it belongs to a philosophical critic to distinguish rather than confound.

The first part of these remarks has related to poetry in its elements and principles; and it has been shewn, as well as the narrow limits assigned them would permit, that what is called poetry in a restricted sense, has a common source with all other forms of order and of beauty, according to which the materials of human life are susceptible of being arranged, and which is poetry in an universal sense.

The second part will have for its object an application of these principles to the present state of the cultivation of poetry, and a defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the

imaginative and creative faculty. For the literature of England, an energetic development of which has ever preceded or accompanied a great and free developement of the national will, has arisen as it were from a new birth. In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty. The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure they are yet compelled to serve, the power which is

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seated on the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age. Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.



NOTES.

1. The following fragments are from the *Relics of Shelley*.* Mr. Garnett, in first giving them to the public, pointed out (p. 89) that they "seem to have formed part of the original exordium of the *Defence of Poetry*, the composition of which was interrupted by an attack of ophthalmia."

"In one mode of considering those two classes of action of the human mind which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind employed upon the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and imagination as mind combining the elements of thought itself. It has been termed the power of association; and on an accurate anatomy of the functions of mind, it would be difficult to assign any other origin to the mass of what we perceive and know than this power. Association is, however, rather a law according to which this power is exerted than the power itself; in the same manner as gravitation is a passive expression of the reciprocal tendency of heavy bodies towards their respective centres. Were these bodies conscious of such a tendency, the name which they would assign to that consciousness would express the cause of gravitation; and it were a vain inquiry as to what might be the cause of that cause. Association bears the same relation to imagination as a mode to a source of action: when we look upon shapes in the fire or the clouds, and image to ourselves the resemblance of familiar

* [The "Mr." Garnett referred to throughout Forman's edition of Shelley's *Prose*, is the late Dr. Richard Garnett, whose book entitled *Relics of Shelley*, was first published (8vo.), London, 1862. ED. THE BIBLOT.]

objects, we do no more than seize the relation of certain points of visible objects, and fill up, blend together, . . .

"The imagination is a faculty not less imperial and essential to the happiness and dignity of the human being, than the reason.

"It is by no means indisputable that what is true, or rather that which the disciples of a certain mechanical and superficial philosophy call true, is more excellent than the beautiful."

2. De Augment. Scient., cap. 1, lib. iii. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

3. In the edition of 1852, *certain* for *sort of*.

4. In the edition of 1852, *measure* for *harmony*.

5. See the Filum Labyrinthi, and the Essay on Death particularly. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

6. Whether the slight laxity in the use of the word *organ* in this profound sentence is the result of haste in transcription we shall perhaps never know. It seems probable that Shelley perceived and meant to propound a great truth even now only admitted by investigators and thinkers in the fore-front of that battle wherein he was so notable a warrior. It cannot be rightly said that a *faculty* is the *organ of the moral nature*, except indeed in a figurative sense; and Shelley may have meant to describe imagination (the faculty strengthened by poetry) as the organ or, as he says higher up, instrument, of the moral nature. The words bear that sense as they stand; but that would be mere repetition; and the thought would really seem to point to the strengthening of an organ by the exercise of its function, *in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb*. If *organ* was in fact, as I suppose,

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meant to be used in that sense, it must have been so used because the writer perceived the moral nature to be a function; and, although this is not proved, the tendency of physiological science is to find that organ in the great sympathetic nervous system. Had Shelley *known* of what organ the moral nature was a function, he would of course have turned the phrase differently.

7. In the transcript, *whether the quick growth* &c.

8. Cf. Plato's *Ion*.

9. This quotation from *Macbeth* (Act III, Sc. 2) is not given correctly in former editions; but it seems doubtful whether the errors were Shelley's own.

10. In the edition of 1852, *Divine Drama*.

11. In the first edition, *poetical*.

12. It is extremely unlikely that Shelley ever saw William Blake's wonderful book, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which is even now* not well enough known to make superfluous the transcription of the following remarkable parallel passage:

"Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

"And being restrained it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

"The history of this is written in *Paradise Lost*, & the Governor or Reason is call'd Messiah.

* [Within the past year this remark has been rendered obsolete by a very decided "revival" in Blake literature and new and cheaper reissues of his writings. ED. THE BIBELOT.]

"And the original Archangel or possessor of the command of the heavenly host is call'd the Devil or Satan and his children are call'd Sin & Death.

"But in the Book of Job Milton's Messiah is call'd Satan.

"For this History has been adopted by both parties.

"It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was cast out, but the Devil's account is, that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss.

"This is shewn in the Gospel, where he prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that Reason may have Ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire.

"Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah.

"But in Milton; the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Ratio of the five senses, & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum.

"Note. The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

13. The fragment of the original Defence referred to [in Preface] corresponds with the passage beginning here and ending with the close of the next paragraph but one. The variations are so considerable that it is best to give the whole fragment just as it stands :

"In one sense Utility expresses the means for producing and fixing the most intense and durable and universal pleasure, and has relation to our intellectual being ; in another it expresses the means of banishing the importunity of the wants of our animal nature ; and surrounding us with security and tranquillity of life, destroying the grosser desires, superstition, &c., and conciliating such a degree of mutual forbearance between men as may spring from motives consistent

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with their own present and manifest advantage. — The author of *The Four Ages of Poetry* employs it solely in the latter sense.

“Undoubtedly the promoters of Utility, in this limited sense, have their due praise; they have their appointed office in society; they follow the footsteps of poets and copy their creations into the book of familiar life, and their exertions are of the highest value so long as they confine their administration of the concerns of the inferior powers of our nature within the limits of what is consistent with what is due to the superior ones. But whilst the sceptic destroys gross superstitions, let him not as some French writers have done, destroy the eternal truths written upon the minds and imaginations of men. Whilst the mechanist abridges, and the political economist combines labour, let them beware that the consequences of their speculations do not tend, as they have in modern England, to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and want. But without an intermixture of the poetical element, such are the effects which must ever flow from the unmitigated exercise of the reason. The rich become richer, and the poor become poorer; and tyranny and anarchy alternately furious.

“It is difficult to define pleasure in the highest sense, without combining a number of words which produce apparent paradoxes on account of the incommunicability of popular and philosophical from an inexplicable want of harmony in the constitution of our mortal being. The pain of the inferior is frequently synonymous with the pleasure of the superior portions of our nature, and terror, anguish, sorrow, despair itself, are often the selectest expressions of our approximation to this good. On this depends our

pleasure with tragic fiction. Our pleasure in tragic fiction depends on this principle; and tragedy produces pleasure by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in intense . This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure in sorrow is far intenser than that of pleasure itself, and it is sweeter to enter into the house of mourning than into the house of mirth. The pleasure of comedy is to that of tragedy as the pleasure of the senses to that of the imagination."

The phrase in the text, "so long as they confine their administration of the concerns of the inferior powers of our nature within the limits due to the superior ones," has always struck me as one of the passages tampered with. The form in which it occurs in the foregoing fragment is such as would tempt any redactor; but it is of course possible that it was Shelley himself who redacted the form at some slight sacrifice of sense.

14. Although Rousseau has been thus classed, he was essentially a poet. The others, even Voltaire, were mere reasoners. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

15. This classification of Michael Angelo should prevent any misconception as to the precise bearing of the depreciatory remarks on some of that great man's productions,—such remarks for instance as those in the note on the Bacchus at p. 71 of the present volume, [this refers to Vol. III, p. 71, of Mr. Forman's edition of Shelley's *Prose*] or those on the Last Judgment, in the letter of the 25th of February, 1819, published in *Fraser's Magazine* for March, 1860.

16. This is a most curious instance of the persistency of ideas and expressions in Shelley's mind and

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work. He had already taken a fancy to this saying of Lady Macbeth's as early as 1810, or perhaps 1809, for it appears first at the head of Chapter IX of *Zastrozzi*. In 1812 it served in the Irish campaign, for we find it in the *Proposals for an Association*. (See Vol. I, p. 376.) [Mr. Forman's edition of Shelley's *Prose*.] And here we have it still doing duty in 1821, in what is usually considered to be Shelley's prose masterpiece.

17. In the edition of 1852, *coming for morning*.

18. The quotation from *Paradise Lost* (Book I, 254-5) is printed as if it were prose in former editions, — *of itself* being substituted for *in itself*. Cf. Byron's *Manfred*, ACT III, Sc. 4 :

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts —
Is its own origin of ill and end —
And its own place and time — its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without ;
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

19. Shelley quotes the same saying of Tasso in his letter of the 16th of August, 1818, to Peacock, who, in printing the letter in *Fraser's Magazine* for March, 1860, gave the words quoted as *Non c'è in mondo chi merita nome di creatore, che Dio ed il Poeta*.

20. So in the first edition, but *confine* in that of 1852 and in the transcript.



The Bibelot

“JOHN KEATS, born October 29, 1795, published his first volume of verse in 1817, his second in the following year, his third in 1820, and died of consumption at Rome, February 23, 1821, in the fourth month of his twenty-sixth year. In his first book there was little foretaste of anything greatly or even genuinely good; but between the marshy and sandy flats of sterile or futile verse there were undoubtedly some few purple patches of floral promise. The style was frequently detestable—a mixture of sham Spenserian and mock Wordsworthian, alternately florid and arid. His second book, *Endymion*, rises in its best passages to the highest level of *Barnfield* and of *Lodge*, the two previous poets with whom, had he published nothing more, he might most properly have been classed; and this, among minor minstrels, is no unenviable place. His third book raised him at once to a foremost rank in the highest class of English poets. Never was any one of them but *Shelley* so little of a marvellous boy and so suddenly revealed as a marvellous man. Never had any poet

suffered so much from the chaotic misarrangement of his poems in every collected edition."¹

Coming directly to the *Seven Odes* which we here reprint according to the established text as given in Forman's edition² it may suffice to point out that our arrangement, while substantially in agreement with Mr. Robert Bridges, is more nearly in the order as originally printed by Keats.³ For one thing, however, we cannot bring ourselves to regard the Ode on Indolence as any other or better than "the objective picturing of a transient mood" of minor poetic value, the awful bathos of line 4

¹ See *Miscellanies*. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (London, 1886) p. 210.

It is the penalty of genius that every scrap of manuscript must be exhumed and in the supposed interests of accuracy and completeness of textual variants find its way into an édition definitive. Fortunately the privilege of selection is still open to us.

² See *The Complete Works of John Keats* Edited by H. Buxton Forman. 12mo. 5 vols. London and Glasgow, 1900-1901. Mr. Forman has just issued a single volume text of the poems, 1906.

³ *Odes 1 to 5 inclusive are taken from the Lamia and Isabella volume of 1820; odes 6 and 7 are from the Endymion of 1818, Books I and IV respectively.*

stanza 6th (and last) alone excluding it from serious consideration as of the first degree of excellence.

What Mr. Bridges has advanced in his Essay is of the highest importance to all students of Keats.¹ Concerning the Odes as a whole his opinion must indeed be regarded as in the nature of a final judgment:

"Had Keats left us only his Odes, his rank among the poets would not be lower than it is, for they have stood apart in literature, at least the six² most famous of them; and these were all written in his best period, when he was under the Miltonic influence—that is, between the early spring of 1819, while he was still engaged on *Hyperion*, and the autumn, when he discarded it."

¹ It is, we regret to say, restricted to the narrow limits of 250 copies: John Keats, *A Critical Essay*. By Robert Bridges. Fcap. 8vo. [London.] Privately printed. MDCCCXCV. Pp. 97. On hand-made paper with frontispiece portrait.

² "These are the six: 1. *Psyche*; 2. *Melancholy*; 3. *Nightingale*; 4. *Greek Urn*; 5. *Indolence*; 6. *Autumn*. To these should be added 7, the fragment of the *May Ode* May 1st, 1818, and 8, the *Ode to Pan* from *Endymion*, bk. I., and 9, the *Bacchic Ode to Sorrow* in *Endymion*, bk. IV." See *A Critical Essay*, p. 54.

Happily at this late day neither the life nor the love nor the verse of Keats stand in need of a defence. It may have been that to his contemporaries such life but seemed "a piece of childhood thrown away." Even so "the fell clutch of Circumstance" stopped short of the ultimate outrage. And speaking for the verse,—great verse left unto a little clan,—we may rest assured that Browning's lines are also in the nature of a final audit :

*"His clenched hand shall unclose at last,
I know, and let out all the beauty.
My poet holds the Future fast,
Accepts the coming ages' duty,
Their Present for this Past."*



FOR APRIL :
SELECTIONS FROM
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN ODES
OF JOHN KEATS.

JOHN KEATS.

*The weltering London ways where children weep
And girls whom none call maidens laugh, — strange road
Miring his outward steps, who inly trode
The bright Castalian brink and Latmos' steep : —
Even such his life's cross-paths ; till deathly deep
He toiled through sands of Lethe ; and long pain,
Weary with labour spurned and love found vain,
In dead Rome's sheltering shadow wrapped his sleep.*

*O pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant lips
And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's eclipse, —
Thou whom the daisies glory in growing o'er, —
Their fragrance clings around thy name, not writ
But rumour'd in water, while the fame of it
Along Time's flood goes echoing evermore.*

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

“No little injustice has been done to Keats by such devotees as fix their mind’s eye only on the more salient and distinctive notes of a genius which in fact was very much more various and tentative, less limited and peculiar, than would be inferred from an exclusive study of his more specially characteristic work. But within the limits of that work must we look of course for the genuine credentials of his fame; and highest among them we must rate his unequalled and unrivalled odes. Of these perhaps the two nearest to absolute perfection, to the triumphant achievement and accomplishment of the very utmost beauty possible to human words, may be that to Autumn and that on a Grecian Urn; the most radiant, fervent, and musical is that to a Nightingale; the most pictorial and perhaps the tenderest in its ardour of passionate fancy is that to Psyche; the subtlest in sweetness of thought and feeling is that on Melancholy. Greater lyrical poetry the world may have seen than any that is in these; lovelier it surely has never seen, nor ever can it possibly see. From the divine fragment of an unfinished ode to Maia we can but guess that if completed it would have been worthy of a place beside the highest.”

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

PROEM.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA,
WRITTEN ON MAY DAY 1818.

*Mother of Hermes ! and still youthful Maia !
 May I sing to thee
As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiaë ?
 Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian ? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan ?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears.
Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day.*

JOHN KEATS.

I.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth ;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-ey'd despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music : — Do I wake or sleep ?

II.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new ;
 More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young ;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

III.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:

Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in !

IV.

TO AUTUMN.

I.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

2.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

I.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

2.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die ;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

VI.

ODE TO PAN.

“O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds —
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth ;
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow !
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan !

“O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom
Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow girted bees
Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped corn ;

The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee ; low creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness ; pent up butterflies
Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year
All its completions — be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
O forester divine !

“Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service ; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit ;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw ;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown —
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king !

“O Harkener to the loud clapping shears
While ever and anon to his shorn peers

A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsmen : Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors :
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge — see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows !

“ Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth :
Be still a symbol of immensity ;
A firmament reflected in a sea ;
An element filling the space between ;
An unknown — but no more : we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean ! ”

ODE TO SORROW.¹

“To Sorrow,
 I bade good-morrow,
 And thought to leave her far away behind;
 But cheerly, cheerly,
 She loves me dearly;
 She is so constant to me, and so kind:
 I would deceive her
 And so leave her,
 But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

“Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
 I sat a weeping: in the whole world wide
 There was no one to ask me why I wept,—
 And so I kept
 Brimming the water-lilly cups with tears
 Cold as my fears.

“Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
 I sat a weeping: what enamour'd bride,
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
 But hides and shrouds
 Beneath dark palm trees by a river side?

¹ See Note, p. 115.

“ And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers : the rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue —
 ’Twas Bacchus and his crew !
The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din —
 ’Twas Bacchus and his kin !
Like to a moving vintage down they came,
Crown’d with green leaves, and faces all on flame ;
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy !
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon : —
 I rush’d into the folly !

“ Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
 With sidelong laughing ;
And little rills of crimson wine imbru’d
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
 For Venus’ pearly bite :
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing.

“ Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence came ye !
So many, and so many, and such glee ?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
Your lutes, and gentler fate ? —
‘ We follow Bacchus ! Bacchus on the wing,
A conquering !
Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide : —
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our wild minstrelsy ! ’

“ Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs ! whence came ye !
So many, and so many, and such glee ?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left
Your nuts in oak-tree cleft ? —
‘ For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree ;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
And cold mushrooms ;
For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth ;
Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth ! —
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our mad minstrelsy ! ’

“ Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
With Asian elephants :

Onward these myriads — with song and dance,
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil :
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide.

“ Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,
From rear to van they scour about the plains ;
A three days' journey in a moment done :
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,
On spleenful unicorn.

“ I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown !
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring !
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce !
The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail,
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail ;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
And all his priesthood moans ;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.—
Into these regions came I following him,

Sick hearted, weary — so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear
Alone, without a peer :
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

“ Come then, Sorrow !
Sweetest Sorrow !
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast :
I thought to leave thee
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best.

“ There is not one,
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid ;
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.”



NOTE

ON THE ODE TO SORROW.

“Lastly, as to the *Ode to Sorrow* in the 4th book of *Endymion*, I regard this as one of the greatest of Keats’ achievements, and agree with all that Mr. Sidney Colvin has said in its praise in his *Life of Keats*. It unfortunately halts in the opening, and the 1st and 4th stanzas especially are unequal to the rest, as is again the 3rd from the end, “Young Stranger,” which for its matter would with more propriety have been cast into the previous section; and these impoverish the effect, and contain expressions which might put some readers off. If they would begin at the 5th stanza and omit the 3rd from the end, they would find little that is not admirable. And, as it stands, the ode is, I think, the better for these omissions. The pictorial description of the Bacchic procession is unmatched for life, wide motion, and romantic dreamy Orientalism, while the concluding stanzas, returning to the first movement, are as lovely as any Elizabethan lyric, and in the same manner. The bold contrast and passion of the ode,

NOTE

in spite of its weaker opening and the few expressions which remind one that it is an early work, give it a unique place among the richest creations of the English Muse."

ROBERT BRIDGES.



The Biobelot

I.

THE literature that has grown up around the name of *Walter Savage Landor* forms a very considerable body of prose. There is also one poem apart from all else *Swinburne* has written,—a supremely splendid tribute to Landor's "faultless fame,"—which the world will least willingly let die. What the living Landor was to the immediate generation of men and women whom he loved or libelled must be sought out in *John Foster's Biography*; for a more critical estimate of the man and his works we shall do well to read *Mr. Sidney Colvin's* as yet unsuperseded monograph. Born at *Warwick* on January 30th, 1775, he died in *Florence* on September 17th, 1864. Between these two dates, comprising the birth of the United States and the close almost of the Civil War reaffirming its existence, Landor lived, and for seventy out of the ninety years allotted him unceasingly, if not ungrudgingly, wrote for posterity. "I shall dine late,"—how often has this been quoted,— "I shall dine late; but the dining room will be lighted,

the guests few and select." And again :
*"I claim no place in the world of letters ; I
am alone, and will be alone, as long as
I live, and after."* Proud words of scorn,
certainly not of propitiation ; but words
that are to be taken literally, and, or so
it seems to some of us, in a way to be as
literally fulfilled.

II.

*It is scant measure of Landor's unwearied
versatility to have chosen less than two score
out of several hundred "occasional" lyrics
and quatrains printed in his final editions.
To bring together this slender sheaf of
impeccable verse even, (which, whatever the
judgment of To-morrow, can never widely
vary in ultimate acceptance of our obiter
dictum,) is admittedly a much lighter task
of love. That it bulks so slightly, however,
makes it in our opinion no less worth while
doing.*

*Enshrined in this bower of lyric loveli-
ness there is one name of all others about
which imagination weaves a magic spell.
Even in its unrevised form Charles Lamb
wrote to Landor he "had lived upon it for
weeks."*¹

¹ See Lamb's letter given in Foster's Life of
Landor, Vol. 1, p. 497, under date of 1832. In

That the Honourable Rose Whitworth Aylmer was born in October, 1779, and died of cholera in Calcutta, March 2, 1800, aged twenty years, is perhaps all we shall ever know of her. It was during Landor's sojourn in Wales that he first met her at Swansea in the autumn of 1796. Long years after when his desk was opened by the friend to whom he gave it, a lock of this young girl's hair was found.

*"Where Ganges rolls his widest wave
She dropped her blossom in the grave;
Her noble name she never changed,
Nor was her noble heart estranged."*

III.

In the first stanza of the first poem reprinted we may read Landor's own unconscious criticism of what he accomplished not only for Rose Aylmer but for a later and perhaps more lasting love. This life-long friendship devoid of passionate extremes for "Iantbe," who in after years became the Countess de Molandè, was not extinguished in his heart when she died on

the evolution of this perfected lyric we first find it in the volume entitled Simonidea (1806), next in Gebir, Count Julian and Other Poems (1831), the final revision appearing in the Works (2 vols.) of 1846.

July 31st, 1851. To her some eighty-five poems all told were addressed.

" Too soon, Iantbe, life is o'er,
And sooner beauty's playful smile.
Kiss me, and grant what I emplore,
Let love remain that little while."

Not therefore as the great classical scholar but as a writer of verse that equals at its best the fairest flowers of the *Anthology* have we brought these poems to our readers. In this little collection lie embedded some of the few immortal things age cannot wither, custom cannot stale.

Let us conclude by a citation from another great stylist of an age earlier and less chargeable with sentiment than the age of Landor. The lines bear the impress of a sad sincerity which is also the sign-manual of genius :

" Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,
Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Ev'n he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays ;
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The Muse forgot, and thou beloved no more ! "

SELECTIONS FROM THE
SHORTER POEMS AND EPIGRAMS OF
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

*But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave :
Shake one and it awakens, then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.*

LANDOR : Gebit. Bk. I.

*I never courted friends or Fame ;
She pouted at me long, at last she came,
And threw her arms around my neck and said,
" Take what hath been for years delay'd,
And fear not that the leaves will fall
One hour the earlier from thy coronal."*

LANDOR : To Joseph Ablett.

*"We are what suns and winds and waters make us ;
The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills
Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles."*

LANDOR : Regeneration.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun ;
All things come back to her, being free ;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive ; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year :

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

*I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before ;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.*

*I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In boliest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.*

*But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,*

*Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now ;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow ;*

*Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot*

*Move thee no more ; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released,
Soul, as thou art.*

*And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.*

*So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame.*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave ; there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful ; there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

LANDOR : Æsop and Rhodopè.

I.

TO IANTHE.

I.

PAST ruin'd Iliion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades ;
Verse calls them forth ; 'tis verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

II.

No, my own love of other years !
No, it must never be.
Much rests with you that yet endears,
Alas ! but what with me ?
Could those bright years o'er me revolve
So gay, o'er you so fair,
The pearl of life we would dissolve
And each the cup might share.
You show that truth can ne'er decay,
Whatever fate befalls ;
I, that the myrtle and the bay
Shoot fresh on ruin'd walls.

III.

Ianthe ! you are call'd to cross the sea !
 A path forbidden *me !*
 Remember, while the Sun his blessing sheds
 Upon the mountain-heads,
 How often we have watcht him laying down
 His brow, and dropt our own
 Against each other's, and how faint and short
 And sliding the support !
 What will succeed it now ? Mine is unblest,
 Ianthe ! nor will rest
 But on the very thought that swells with pain.
 O bid me hope again !
 O give me back what Earth, what (without you)
 Not Heaven itself can do,
 One of the golden days that we have past ;
 And let it be my last !
 Or else the gift would be, however sweet,
 Fragile and incomplete.

IV.

Well I remember how you smiled
 To see me write your name upon
 The soft sea-sand. . " *O ! what a child !*
 You think you're writing upon stone !"
 I have since written what no tide
 Shall ever wash away, what men
 Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide
 And find Ianthe's name again.

V.

Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,
 Cut down, and up again as blithe as ever ;
 From you, Ianthe, little troubles pass
 Like little ripples down a sunny river.

VI.

Soon, O Ianthe ! life is o'er,
 And sooner beauty's heavenly smile :
 Grant only (and I ask no more) ,
 Let love remain that little while.

VII.

Remain, ah not in youth alone,
 Tho' youth, where you are, long will stay,
 But when my summer days are gone,
 And my autumnal haste away.
 "*Can I be always by your side ?*"
 No ; but the hours you can, you must,
 Nor rise at Death's approaching stride,
 Nor go when dust is gone to dust.

VIII.

It often comes into my head
 That we may dream when we are dead,
 But I am far from sure we do.

O that it were so ! then my rest
Would be indeed among the blest ;
I should for ever dream of you.

II.

IN Clementina's artless mien
Lucilla asks me what I see,
And are the roses of sixteen
Enough for me ?

Lucilla asks, if that be all,
Have I not cull'd as sweet before :
Ah yes, Lucilla ! and their fall
I still deplore.

I now behold another scene,
Where Pleasure beams with heaven's own light,
More pure, more constant, more serene,
And not less bright :

Faith, on whose breast the Loves repose,
Whose chain of flowers no force can sever,
And Modesty who, when she goes,
Is gone for ever.

III.

ROSE AYLMER.¹

AH what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine !
What every virtue, every grace !
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

¹ "The effect obtained by the iteration of the young girl's two beautiful names at the beginning of the fourth and fifth lines is an afterthought. In the place of this simple, musical invocation, the fourth line had originally begun with a lame explanatory conjunction, 'For, Aylmer,' and the fifth with a commonplace adjective, 'Sweet Aylmer.' In the seventh line 'memories' is a correction for the alliterative and vaguer 'sorrows' of the first draft."—COLVIN'S *Landor*, pp. 43, 44.

CHILD OF A DAY.

CHILD of a day, thou knowest not
The tears that overflow thine urn,
The gushing eyes that read thy lot,
Nor, if thou knewest, couldst return !
And why the wish ! the pure and blest
Watch like thy mother o'er thy sleep.
O peaceful night ! O envied rest !
Thou wilt not ever see her weep.

ROSE AYLMER'S HAIR, GIVEN BY HER SISTER.¹

BEAUTIFUL spoils ! borne off from vanquisht death !
Upon my heart's high altar shall ye lie,
Moved but by only one adorer's breath,
Retaining youth, rewarding constancy.

¹ " 'ROSE AYLMER's hair.' This is the inscription in Landor's unmistakable hand on a small paper packet containing a lock of hair of a light amber tint, or should one say, of sunlit gold, and of a beautiful texture."

"The lock of Rose Aylmer's hair, found in the cedar-wood desk nearly a hundred years after her death, was given to Landor by her half-sister, Mrs. Paynter."— See *Wheeler's Letters and Unpublished Writings of Landor*, pp. 64 and 74.

No portrait of Rose Aylmer exists. A sketch of her tomb is given from a photograph by Mr. Wheeler (p. 72).

IV.

TO THE SISTER OF ELIA.

COMFORT thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile !
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.
What is it we deplore ?

He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,
Far worthier things than tears.
The love of friends without a single foe :
Unequalled lot below !

His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine ;
For these dost thou repine ?
He may have left the lowly walks of men ;
Left them he has ; what then ?

Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise ?
Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak

Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him ! from the region of the blest
He speaks : he bids thee rest.

V.

ON RECEIVING A MONTHLY ROSE.

PÆSTUM! thy roses long ago,
 All roses far above,
 Twice in the year were call'd to blow
 And braid the locks of Love.

He saw the city sink in dust,
 Its rose's roots decay'd,
 And cried in sorrow, "Find I must
 Another for my braid."

First Cyprus, then the Syrian shore,
 To Pharpar's lucid rill,
 Did those two large dark eyes explore,
 But wanted something still.

Damascus fill'd his heart with joy,
 So sweet her roses were!
 He cull'd them; but the wayward boy
 Thought them ill worth his care.

"I want them every month," he cried,
 "I want them every hour:
 Perennial rose, and none beside,
 Henceforth shall be my flower."

VI.

TO YOUTH.

WHERE art thou gone, light-ankled Youth?
With wing at either shoulder,
And smile that never left thy mouth
Until the Hours grew colder :

Then somewhat seem'd to whisper near
That thou and I must part ;
I doubted it ; I felt no fear,
No weight upon the heart :

If aught befell it, Love was by
And roll'd it off again ;
So, if there ever was a sigh,
'Twas not a sigh of pain.

I may not call thee back ; but thou
Returnest when the hand
Of gentle Sleep waves o'er my brow
His poppy-crested wand ;

Then smiling eyes bend over mine,
Then lips once prest invite ;
But sleep hath given a silent sign,
And both, alas ! take flight.

VII.

TO AGE.

WELCOME, old friend ! These many years
Have we lived door by door :
The Fates have laid aside their shears
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocil at an age
When better boys were taught,
But thou at length hast made me sage,
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,
Too little they from me,
But thou hast pointed well the pen
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,
One vile, the other vain ;
One's scourge, the other's telescope,
I shall not see again :

Rather what lies before my feet
My notice shall engage . .
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age.

VIII.

FATE! I have askt few things of thee,
And fewer have to ask.
Shortly, thou knowest, I shall be
No more : then con thy task.

If one be left on earth so late
Whose love is like the past,
Tell her in whispers, gentle Fate !
Not even love must last.

Tell her I leave the noisy feast
Of life, a little tired,
Amid its pleasures few possest
And many undesired.

Tell her with steady pace to come
And, where my laurels lie,
To throw the freshest on the tomb,
When it has caught her sigh.

Tell her to stand some steps apart
From others on that day,
And check the tear (if tear should start)
Too precious for dull clay.

IX.

PLAYS.

How soon, alas, the hours are over,
Counted us out to play the lover !
And how much narrower is the stage,
Allotted us to play the sage !
But when we play the fool, how wide
The theatre expands ; beside,
How long the audience sits before us !
How many prompters ! what a chorus !

X.

TO A CYCLAMEN.

I COME to visit thee again,
My little flowerless cyclamen ;
To touch the hand, almost to press,
That cheer'd thee in thy loneliness.
What could thy careful guardian find
Of thee in form, of me in mind,
What is there in us rich or rare,
To make us claim a moment's care ?
Unworthy to be so carest,
We are but withering leaves at best.

XI.

OFTEN I have heard it said
That her lips are ruby-red.
Little heed I what they say,
I have seen as red as they.
Ere she smiled on other men,
Real rubies were they then.

When she kist me once in play,
Rubies were less bright than they,
And less bright were those which shone
In the palace of the Sun.
Will they be as bright again?
Not if kist by other men.

XII.

SWEET was the song that Youth sang once,
And passing sweet was the response;
But there are accents sweeter far
When Love leaps down our evening star,

Holds back the blighting wings of Time,
Melts with his breath the crusty rime,
And looks into our eyes, and says,
“Come, let us talk of former days.”

XIII.

OLD STYLE.

AURELIUS, Sire of Hungrinesses!
Thee thy old friend Catullus blesses,
And sends thee six fine watercresses.

There are who would not think me quite
(Unless we were old friends) polite
To mention whom you should invite.

Look at them well; and turn it o'er
In your own mind . . I'd have but four . .
Lucullus, Cæsar, and two more.

XIV.

LITTLE AGLAE, TO HER FATHER ON HER STATUE BEING CALLED LIKE HER.

FATHER! the little girl we see
Is not, I fancy, so like me . .
You never hold her on your knee.

When she came home the other day
You kiss'd her; but I cannot say
She kiss'd you first and ran away.

XV.

ON CATULLUS.

TELL me not what too well I know
About the bard of Sirmio . .
Yes, in Thalia's son
Such stains there are . . as when a Grace
Sprinkles another's laughing face
With nectar, and runs on.

XVI.

ON SEEING A HAIR OF LUCRETIA BORGIA.

BORGIA, thou once wert almost too august
And high for adoration ; now thou'rt dust.
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,
Calm hair, meandering in pellucid gold.

XVII.

How many voices gaily sing,
“ O happy morn, O happy spring
Of life ! ” Meanwhile there comes o'er me
A softer voice from Memory,
And says, “ If loves and hopes have flown
With years, think too what griefs are gone ! ”

XVIII.

I.

SHELLEY and Keats, on earth unknown
One to the other, now are gone
Where only such pure Spirits meet
And sing before them words as sweet.

II.

Thou hast not lost all glory, Rome !
With thee have found their quiet home
Two whom we followers most admire
Of those that swell our sacred quire ;
And many a lower'd voice repeats
Hush ! Here lies Shelley ! here lies Keats !

XIX.

DEATH OF THE DAY.

M^y pictures blacken in their frames
As night comes on,
And youthful maids and wrinkled dames
Are now all one.

Death of the day ! a sterner Death
Did worse before ;
The fairest form, the sweetest breath,
Away he bore.

XX.

FALSE are our dreams, or there are fields below
 To which the weariest feet the swiftest go ;
 And there are bitter streams the wretched bless,
 Before whose thirst they lose their bitterness.
 'Tis hard to love ! to unlove harder yet !
 Not so to die — and then, perhaps, forget.

XXI.

THE place where soon I think to lie,
 In its old creviced nook hard-by
 Rears many a weed :
 If parties bring you there, will you
 Drop slily in a grain or two
 Of wall-flower seed ?

I shall not see it, and (too sure !)
 I shall not ever hear that your
 Light step was there ;
 But the rich odour some fine day
 Will, what I cannot do, repay
 That little care.

XXII.

THE grateful heart for all things blesses
Not only joy, but grief endears :
I love you for your few caresses,
I love you for my many tears.

XXIII.

VARIOUS the roads of life ; in one
All terminate, one lonely way.
We go ; and “ Is he gone ? ”
Is all our best friends say.

XXIV.

DEATH stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear :
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

XXV.

DYING SPEECH OF AN OLD PHILOSOPHER
ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.

I STROVE with none ; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art ;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks and I am ready to depart.

XXVI.

How calm, O life, is thy decline !
Ah, it is only when the sun
His hot and headstrong course hath run,
Heaven's guiding stars serenely shine !

XXVII.

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

To my ninth decade I have totter'd on,
And no soft arm bends now my steps to steady ;
She, who once led me where she would, is gone,
So when he calls me, Death shall find me ready.

ENVOI.

WEARERS of rings and chains !
Pray do not take the pains
To set me right.
In vain my faults ye quote ;
I write as others wrote
On Sunium's height.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

For those who would care to know more of Landor in the best editions extant the following brief list will prove of value.

I.

FOSTER'S COLLECTED EDITION:

1. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. Collected and edited by John Foster. Portraits and illustrations. 8vo. 8 vols. LONDON, 1876.
2. WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. A Biography. By John Foster. Portraits. 8vo. 2 vols. LONDON, 1869.
3. THE SAME. Revised edition in one volume. Portrait. 8vo. LONDON, 1879.

II.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS [IN PROSE AND VERSE] OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. Arranged and edited by Sidney Colvin. (Golden Treasury Series.) 18mo. LONDON, 1882. Issued by the Macmillan Co. at \$1.00 net.

III.

LANDOR. By Sidney Colvin. (English Men of Letters.) 8vo. LONDON, 1881. A cheaper edition has since been issued by the Macmillan Co. at 40 cents net.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

IV.

CRUMP'S COLLECTED EDITION :

1. **IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS.** By Walter Savage Landor. With Bibliographical and Explanatory Notes by Charles G. Crump. Fcap 8vo. 6 vols. (Also 200 copies on large paper.) LONDON, J. M. Dent & Co., 1891.
2. **THE LONGER PROSE WORKS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.** Edited with Notes and Index by Charles G. Crump. Fcap 8vo. 2 vols. (Also 150 copies on large paper.) LONDON, J. M. Dent & Co., 1892.
3. **POEMS, DIALOGUES IN VERSE AND EPIGRAMS.** By Walter Savage Landor. Edited with Notes by Charles G. Crump. 2 vols. Fcap 8vo. (Also 150 copies on large paper.) LONDON, J. M. Dent & Co., 1892.

Crump's edition of Landor is supplied by the Macmillan Co. at \$1.50 net per volume. It is by far the most complete and satisfactory text in print, but though professedly based on Foster it does not give all of the poems and shorter pieces in the earlier collection.

V.

PERICLES AND ASPASIA. By Walter Savage Landor. Edited by C. G. Crump. With etchings by Herbert Railton. Fcap 8vo. 2 vols. LONDON, J. M. Dent & Co., 1890. Also 225 copies on large paper. (The Temple Library Edition.)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

VI.

LETTERS AND OTHER UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. Edited by Stephen Wheeler. Portraits. 8vo. LONDON, 1897.

This work gives a bibliography of Landor from 1795 to 1862 (see pp. 245-276,) which should be compared with Mr. Crump's labors in the same field.

VII.

LETTERS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC. Edited by Stephen Wheeler. Portraits. 8vo. LONDON, 1899.

Mr. Wheeler's two volumes are of importance containing as they do material not found elsewhere.

VIII.

THE FOLIO PERICLES AND ASPASIA.

PERICLES AND ASPASIA. By Walter Savage Landor. NEW YORK. Privately printed for the Scott-Thaw Co., 1903. Portrait. Folio. Pp. xii: 236.

Printed in The Chiswick Library of Noble Authors, of which Pericles and Aspasia was the first volume. Of this edition 430 copies were done at the Chiswick Press, London, 200 only being for sale in America. The noblest edition issued or that in all probability ever will be issued. One flaw alone must be noted: the title-page was *designed* and in so doing a splendid opportunity of showing what type could have accomplished was forever lost. Compare for a single example the stark nobility of Mr. Arthur Humphrey's title-pages set in type for his Quarto Series of reprints (in the Royal Library) now issuing in London.



The Bibelot

THE new Oxford edition of The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood (1906,) accentuates the fact that Hood of all moderns has received the worst possible usage at the hands of his professed admirers as well as from those who were nearest and dearest to him. That we have within a single octavo nearly every line he wrote does not lessen our regret. The ten volumes of prose and verse edited by his son was in its inception a monument of senseless if successful assiduity:¹ the latest "complete-in-one-volume" edition is in principle planned along precisely similar lines. How else characterize such accumulated debris, "collected" or "complete" as you will, when a writer of Hood's peculiar genre should be represented and remembered by his eternal best and not remain through all time damned by his ephemeral worst? Viewed in this light Moxon's collection of the Serious Poems, or better still Canon

¹ See Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860. By George Saintsbury. Second Series. London, 1895. Pp. 109-133.

Ainger's edition,² where if we must have the humorous verse it is in a volume apart, are of an order of excellence which should outlive the curious zeal of men who like Mr. Jerrold undertake to perpetuate the unutterable inanities of their unhappy victim, great or small.³

In Hood's Plea of the Midsummer Fairies and other Poems published the same year that saw Poe's Tamerlane and Tennyson's Poems of Two Brothers brought to birth, is found over two-thirds of the material here reprinted; verse which shows no trace of later revision or need of it. The fate of this 1827 volume was to

2 Moxon's edition first issued in 1846 has been reprinted many times, the nineteenth impression bearing date of 1866. The Poems, Vol. I Serious, and Vol. II of Wit and Humour, were edited by Alfred Ainger in the Eversley Series. London, 1897. This edition is a delightful piece of honest bookcraft, and with the Memoir, (Vol. I, pp. xi-lxxxi,) taken in connexion with Prof. Saintsbury's essay leaves little to be desired. The Serious Poems, illustrated by H. Granville Fell in Newnes' Thin Paper Series, London, 1901, (New York, Scribners,) is another pleasing volume with a frontispiece far out of the ordinary.

3 Mr. Jerrold's Oxford edition may be taken as a type of editing which is best associated with the laborious annotations of Mr. H. B. Forman who for some years has been literally engaged in threshing the poetry out of Keats!

fall dead from the press.⁴ Twenty years later the sombre glories of *The Haunted House*, *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, and *The Elm Tree*, not to insist upon the two poems which are known wherever English is spoken, gave Hood that rare position in literature he still holds and will forever hold against all chance of change.

Thus we may considerably relegate the vast bulk of the poet's alleged humorous writings to the land of no laughter, Miss Kilmansegg alone excepted. Why not as considerably admit the non-existence of humorous poetry, and so have done with it? Hood's frightful facility as a punster and not his illness or poverty was the real tragedy which came nigh to making utter shipwreck of his genius. Do away with the memory of "a' that" and what remains is cloth of gold of perdurable texture.

To the hypercritical it is conceivably a far cry from Shelley, Keats and Landor to Hood. None the less from Keats he

⁴ The late Dr. Richard Garnett opined that "the only pieces of his early period which unmistakably reveal the poet, are 'Eugene Aram's Dream' and 'Ruth.'" In view of Dr. Garnett's having owned a copy of the 1827 *Plea*, now in our possession, this is surely a most extraordinary lapse of memory or of judgment, or of both.

derived somewhat of his lyrical best; verse, if such a term is applicable, that is righteously derivative. The Plea was very Keats, indeed; so too is Lycus and the Ode to Melancholy, to mention a few specimens chosen at random. With these lyrics and sonnets we are therefore content to leave Thomas Hood to his slowly widening poetic fame. He was born May 23, 1799, and died May 3, 1845, not old in years, but worn out with much physical suffering when his good hour came at last. Thackeray, who knew and loved the Man and rejoiced in the Poet, said the final word about him as of all others who have laboured at the literary oar: "the voyage is over, and the Harbour of Rest is found."



FOR JUNE :
A LITTLE BOOK FOR
JOHN O'MAHONY'S FRIENDS
BY KATHARINE TYNAN.

LYRICS FROM
THOMAS HOOD.

The field in which Hood is distinctive is a borderland between Fancy and Fantasy. In this region he reigns supreme. Nevertheless, he has made successful and frequent incursions, although vacillatingly, into the domain of the true Imagination.

POE: *Marginalia.*

WE shall not find in Hood anything like the notes, once heard and never forgotten, of "La belle Dame sans Merci," of "Oh World! Oh Life! Oh, Time!" of "All Thoughts, all Passions, all Delights," of "Proud Maisie." No poem of his attains quite the first rank as a lyric; and every poem of his which is not a lyric has more or fewer blemishes, tediousnesses, inequalities. Scarcely any poet who was so much of a Christian or an ordinary man as Hood in all relations of life,—who had so little of fine frenzy, who was so little sad or bad or mad, who was so far removed from Bohemianism, who lived such a steady-going, hard-working, when he could scot-and-lot paying existence—has left work of such poetical quality: none who had so little literary culture has such a flavour of literature properly so-called.

And in no poet is there a clearer instance on the one hand of the fact that poetry can touch any life to its own issues, and on the other, of the curious, the unmistakable, and yet the scarcely to be defined difference between what is poetry and what is not. It is no easy task, taking a piece of say Haynes Bayly's and a piece of Hood's to point out exactly what it is that makes one ridiculous and the other delightful. We might not care to have all Parnassus peopled with his likes; he has only his own place and only his own value. But that place and that value are secure as long as any one who at once knows poetry and can read English comes across the right divisions of his work.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.¹ IRREMEABILIS UNDA.²

"Drown'd! drown'd!"—HAMLET.

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!
Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;

a! misera sortis
 pondere fessa!
a! temere mortis
 viam ingressa!
tollite facile
 onus tam bellum,
onus tam gracile,
 tamque tenellum.

¹ The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.—POE: *The Poetic Principle*.

First published in *Hood's Magazine*, May, 1844. "From some fragmentary verses found among Hood's papers by his son, it looks as though the poet had intended to write another 'part' to this poem, in which should be told the story of the mother who threw her illegitimate child into the river and was then 'legitimately done to death.'"—(See Oxford edition of *Hood's Poetical Works*, p. 765.) Judging from the three scraps cited it seems well no such intention was ever carried into effect.

² As a marginal accompaniment we give the Latin version of *The Bridge of Sighs*, in itself a *tour de force*, by Prof. R. Y. Tyrrell of Trinity College, Dublin. Those who care to know what can be made of some of the choicest flowers of English poetry when transplanted into Latium soil will do well to procure *Florilegium Latinum: Translations into Latin Verse [of Victorian and Pre-Victorian Poets] edited by Francis St. John Thackeray and Edward Daniel Stone*. Crown 8vo. 2 vols. London and New York, 1899-1902.

Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
While the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing. —

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her;
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family —
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammyly.

panni gravatum
cadaver adstringunt,
vestes elatum
ceu funebres cingunt,
undam stillantes
heu ! illaetabilem :
statis? — amantes
ferte amabilem.
ne fastidientes
corpus attingite,
sed flebilem flentes
animo fingite ;
quod fecerit male
donate tam bellae ;
nil restat ni quale
decorum puellae.
est lapsa procacia
heu ! puellari,
sed piget audacia
facta rimari.
labes abivit,
et maculae cunctae ;
forma sed vivit
superstes defunctae.
lapsa : — sed Evae,
vos qui adstatis,
matris primaevae
genus negatis?

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

labris abluite
tabem imbutam,
et comam struite
flavam solutam;
rogent stupentes,
quam domum coluerit?
quinam parentes?
ecquem habuerit
fratrum, sororum,
an unum carissimum,
unum cunctorum
vinclum artissimum?
a! humanarum
quam raro homullos
miseriarum
miseret ullos!
eheu, quam flebilis,
urbe tam plena
iacuit debilis,
tecti egena!
pater et mater
amorem debuerant,
soror et frater,
sed omnem exuerant;
amor violenter
profundo mersari,
et ipsi videntur
di nunc aversari!

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver
But not the dark arch,
Or the black, flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled —
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran, —
Over the brink of it !
Picture it — think of it,
Dissolute man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !

en ! late lychnorum
qua tremulum lumen
per aequor fusorum
repercutit flumen
e vicinarum
summis et imis
tot fenestrarum
clathris et rimis,
noctis stupescit
sub axe frigentis,
ventis grescit
iam brumae cedentis :
arcum minantem
non amplius horrens
umbram nigrantem
qua glomerat torrens,
mundi amari
usu insana,
libens scrutari
mortis arcana,
quolibet avida
fugere lucem,
petit impavida
gurgitem trucem :
animis fingite
saltum audacem ;
aestus depingite
cursum rapacem ;

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently, — kindly, —
Smooth, and compose them
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurr'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest. —
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

hic vos, quot estis
salaces, lavate,
hinc, si potestis,
hinc sitim sedate!
tollite facile
onus tam bellum
corpus tam gracile
tamque tenellum.
iaceant frigidi
artus decenter,
somno iam rigidi
oculi dentur,
caeci rimantes
per lutum concretum
metus instantes
post imminens letum.
poenas immeritas
luit ploranda,
hominum feritas
bruta, nefanda,
miserae mentem,
timoribus spretis,
agit furentem
in portum quietis.
manus nectantur
trans pectus, et ore
muto loquantur
supplicis more,

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour.

delicta fatentis
quaecunque peccavit,
et pacem aventis
quam Jesus paravit.

ODE:

AUTUMN.

I.

I SAW old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn; —
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

II.

Where are the songs of Summer? — With the sun,
Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,
Till shade and silence waken up as one,
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.
Where are the merry birds? — Away, away,
On panting wings through the inclement skies,
Lest owls should prey
Undazzled at noon-day,
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

III.

Where are the blooms of Summer? — In the west,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,

When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her flow'rs
To a most gloomy breast.

Where is the pride of Summer, — the green prime, —
The many, many leaves all twinkling? — Three
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling, — and one upon the old oak tree!

Where is the Dryad's immortality? —
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

IV.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,
The ants have brimm'd their garner with ripe grain,
And honey bees have stored
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells;
The swallows all have wing'd across the main;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone,
Upon a mossy stone,
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far away,

Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, grey upon the grey.

v.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair:
She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care; —
There is enough of wither'd everywhere
To make her bower, — and enough of gloom;
There is enough of sadness to invite,
If only for the rose that died, — whose doom
Is Beauty's, — she that with the living bloom
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light; —
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear, —
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

SONG.

FOR MUSIC.

I.

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here!

II.

Thy gown should be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipp'd in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

III.

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dow'r —
But Fairies have broke their wands,
And wishing has lost its pow'r!

FAIR INES.

I.

O SAW ye not fair Ines?
She 's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest:
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

II.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the Moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivall'd bright;
And blessed will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write!

III.

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whisper'd thee so near! —

Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?

IV.

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore; —
It would have been a beauteous dream,
— If it had been no more!

V.

Alas, alas, fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you 've loved so long.

VI.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore

So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before, —
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore !
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more !

AUTUMN.

I.

THE Autumn skies are flush'd with gold,
And fair and bright the rivers run;
These are but streams of winter cold,
And painted mists that quench the sun.

II.

In secret boughs no sweet birds sing,
In secret boughs no bird can shroud;
These are but leaves that take to wing,
And wintry winds that pipe so loud.

III.

'Tis not trees' shade, but cloudy glooms
That on the cheerless vallies fall,
The flowers are in their grassy tombs,
And tears of dew are on them all.

BALLAD.

I.

SPRING it is cheery,
Winter is dreary,
Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly;
When he 's forsaken,
Wither'd and shaken,
What can an old man do but die?

II.

Love will not clip him,
Maids will not lip him,
Maud and Marian pass him by;
Youth it is sunny,
Age has no honey, —
What can an old man do but die?

III.

June it was jolly,
O for its folly!
A dancing leg and a laughing eye;
Youth may be silly,
Wisdom is chilly, —
What can an old man do but die?

IV.

Friends, they are scanty,
Beggars are plenty,
If he has followers, I know why;
Gold 's in his clutches,
(Buying him crutches!) —
What can an old man do but die?

BALLAD.

SHE 's up and gone, the graceless Girl!
And robb'd my failing years;
My blood before was thin and cold
But now 'tis turn'd to tears;—
My shadow falls upon my grave,
So near the brink I stand,
She might have staid a little yet,
And led me by the hand!

Aye, call her on the barren moor,
And call her on the hill,
'Tis nothing but the heron's cry,
And plover's answer shrill;
My child is flown on wilder wings,
Than they have ever spread,
And I may even walk a waste
That widen'd when she fled.

Full many a thankless child has been,
But never one like mine;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
Her drink was rosy wine;
But now she 'll share the robin's food,
And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
To meet her father's will!

SONG.

I.

THE stars are with the voyager
Wherever he may sail ;
The moon is constant to her time ;
The sun will never fail ;
But follow, follow round the world,
The green earth and the sea ;
So love is with the lover's heart,
Wherever he may be.

II.

Wherever he may be, the stars
Must daily lose their light ;
The moon will veil her in the shade ;
The sun will set at night.
The sun may set, but constant love
Will shine when he 's away ;
So that dull night is never night,
And day is brighter day.

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,
The roses, red and white,
The vi'lets, and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I 'm farther off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy.

AUTUMN.

THE Autumn is old,
The sere leaves are flying ; —
He hath gather'd up gold,
And now he is dying ; —
Old age, begin sighing !

The vintage is ripe,
The harvest is heaping ; —
But some that have sow'd
Have no riches for reaping ; —
Poor wretch, fall a weeping !

The year 's in the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning ; —
Cold winter gives warning.

The rivers run chill,
The red sun is sinking,
And I am grown old,
And life is fast shrinking ; —
Here 's enow for sad thinking !

RUTH.

SHE stood breast high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd ; — such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim ; —
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks : —

Sure, I said, heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean,
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

THE FORSAKEN.

THE dead are in their silent graves,
And the dew is cold above,
And the living weep and sigh,
Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
But now the living cause my pain :
How couldst thou steal me from my tears,
To leave me to my tears again ?

My Mother rests beneath the sod, —
Her rest is calm and very deep :
I wish'd that she could see our loves, —
But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
The morning saw them turn'd to grey,
Once they were black and well beloved,
But thou art changed, — and so are they !

The useless lock I gave thee once,
To gaze upon and think of me,
Was ta'en with smiles, — but this was torn
In sorrow that I send to thee !

THE DEATH-BED.

WE watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seem'd to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied —
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed — she had
Another morn than ours.

BALLAD.

I.

IT was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast ;
It was the time of roses, —
We pluck'd them as we pass'd !

II.

That churlish season never frown'd
On early lovers yet !
Oh, no — the world was newly crown'd
With flowers when first we met.

III.

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast ;
It was the time of roses, —
We pluck'd them as we pass'd !

TO A FALSE FRIEND.

I.

OUR hands have met, but not our hearts ;
Our hands will never meet again.
Friends, if we have ever been,
Friends we cannot now remain :
I only know I loved you once,
I only know I loved in vain ;
Our hands have met, but not our hearts ;
Our hands will never meet again !

II.

Then farewell to heart and hand !
I would our hands had never met :
Even the outward form of love
Must be resign'd with some regret.
Friends, we still might seem to be,
If my wrong could e'er forget
Our hands have join'd but not our hearts :
I would our hands had never met !

FLOWERS.

I WILL not have the mad Clytie,
Whose head is turn'd by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean,
Whom, therefore, I will shun;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun; —
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead; —
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,
And so is no mate for me —
And the daisy's cheek is tipp'd with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom 's betroth'd to the bee; —
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

VERSES IN AN ALBUM.

I.

FAR above the hollow
Tempest, and its moan,
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone, —
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him,
On his joyous throne.

II.

So when I behold me
In an orb as bright,
How thy soul doth fold me
In its throne of light!
Sorrow never paineth,
Nor a care attaineth,
To that blessed height.

TO ———.

COMPOSED AT ROTTERDAM.

I GAZE upon a city, —
A city new and strange, —
Down many a watery vista
My fancy takes a range;
From side to side I saunter,
And wonder where I am;
And can *you* be in England,
And *I* at Rotterdam!

Before me lie dark waters
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep;
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am;
Yes, yes, you are in England,
And I 'm at Rotterdam.

Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line,
And masts of spicy vessels
From western Surinam,
All tell me you 're in England,
But I 'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors, how outlandish
The face and form of each !
They deal in foreign gestures,
And use a foreign speech ;
A tongue not learn'd near Isis,
Or studied by the Cam,
Declares that you 're in England,
And I 'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market
My doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue,
The Genius of the place ;
And to the great Erasmus
I offer my salaam ;
Who tells me you 're in England,
But I 'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee-room is open —
I mingle in its crowd, —
The dominos are noisy —
The hookahs raise a cloud ;
The flavour now of Fearon's,
That mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you 're in England,
And I 'm at Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper —
The toast it shall be mine,

In schiedam, or in sherry,
Tokay, or hock of Rhine;
It well deserves the brightest,
Where sunbeam ever swam —
“The Girl I love in England”
I drink at Rotterdam!

March, 1835.

SONNETS.

I.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKSPEARE.

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled !
Hues of all flow'rs that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red, —
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honour glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold ! —
Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloom'd elate ;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turn'd to clay, whereof they were create ;
But God Apollo hath them all enroll'd,
And blazon'd on the very clouds of fate !

II.

LOVE.

LOVE, dearest Lady, such as I would speak,
 Lives not within the humour of the eye; —
 Not being but an outward phantasy,
 That skims the surface of a tinted cheek, —
 Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,
 As if the rose made summer, — and so lie
 Amongst the perishable things that die,
 Unlike the love which I would give and seek
 Whose health is of no hue — to feel decay
 With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
 Love is its own great loveliness alway,
 And takes new lustre from the touch of time;
 Its bough owns no December and no May,
 But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

III.

DEATH.

IT is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this, — but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft, — and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

IV.

LEAR.

A POOR old king, with sorrow for my crown,
 Throned upon straw, and mantled with the wind —
 For pity, my own tears have made me blind
 That I might never see my children's frown;
 And may be madness, like a friend, has thrown
 A folded fillet over my dark mind,
 So that unkindly speech may sound for kind, —
 Albeit I know not. — I am childish grown —
 And have not gold to purchase wit withal —
 I that have once maintain'd most royal state —
 A very bankrupt now that may not call
 My child, my child — all-beggar'd save in tears,
 Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,
 Foolish — and blind — and overcome with years !

STANZAS.

I.

FAREWELL Life! my senses swim,
And the world is growing dim:
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night —
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapour chill;
Strong the earthy odour grows —
I smell the mould above the rose!

II.

Welcome Life! the Spirit strives!
Strength returns and hope revives;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn, —
O'er the earth there comes a bloom;
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapour cold —
I smell the rose above the mould!

April, 1845.



The Bibelot

“By Killarney's lakes and fells.”

TWO little pamphlets¹ lie before us, one of which we take the unasked liberty of reprinting in the belief that what was meant for a few personal friends will be found on perusal acceptable to many another in whose heart lingers the recollection of some life once very near and dear that has now passed into the great silence.

It is no violation of confidence reposed in us to say that this brilliant young barrister, John O'Mahony, whose untimely death took place during November, 1905, was a brother-in-law of Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson.

The four poems appended by Mrs. Hinkson to her brief memorial are, or so they seem to us, among the truest and sweetest of her later lyrics.

It is the simple, unaffected tenderness of this little book of memories so genuinely Celtic, and yet so universally human, that constitutes its note of distinction and makes it difficult to find or even seek its like else-

¹ The other booklet is entitled *A Little Book for Mary Gill's Friends*, and if permission is given by its author we may later on reprint it in these pages.

where. We fail to discover in the prose or verse of Mr. Yeats for example just this unadorned, natural pathos.

What was said so beautifully once and forever of Artemus Ward by Mr. James Rboades some forty years ago, may well be recalled and reaffirmed of John O'Mahony in this foreword of ours to A Little Book for His Friends.

Is he gone to a land of no laughter —

This man that made mirth for us all ?

Proves death but a silence hereafter,

Where the echoes of earth cannot fall ?

Once closed, have the lips no more duty,

No more pleasure the exquisite ears ?

Has the heart done o'erflowing with beauty,

As the eyes have with tears ?

Nay, if aught be sure, what can be surer

Than that earth's good decays not with earth ?

And of all the heart's springs none are purer

Than the springs of the fountains of mirth ?

He that sounds them has pierced the heart's hollows,

The places where tears are and sleep ;

For the foam-flakes that dance in life's shallows

Are wrung from life's deep.

For the man in our heart lingered after,

When the merriment died from our ears,

And those who were loudest in laughter

Are silent in tears.

FOR JULY :

THREE LETTERS TO DEAD AUTHORS

BY ANDREW LANG.

A LITTLE BOOK FOR
JOHN O'MAHONY'S FRIENDS
By
KATHARINE TYNAN.

*"For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer."*

A LITTLE BOOK FOR
JOHN O'MAHONY'S FRIENDS.

A MEMORY.

WE used to say that Stevenson should have known him to give him immortality in a book. He was a true Stevenson character. Indeed, in a manner of speaking he was a brother of Stevenson.

Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck.

The sestet might have been written of him down to the

. . . something of the Shorter Catechist,

for he was oddly, sincerely pious, and one never could be sure of the moment when he might not read you a sudden homily, although his wildness drove a coach and four through the conventional laws. Wild—he was wild; wild as the wind that comes over the mountains, and, like that, sparkling and full of refreshment. He had the wild, dark eye of an Arab horse, an eye that in houses and amid towns meditated flight. You had a note of warning when, suddenly furtive, his eye was turned on you that at any moment he might be off like the wind.

He loved the wild ones of the world like himself. I really think in his heart of hearts he had rather be a jolly tramp than the brilliant and successful lawyer Fate forced him to be. Yes, Fate forced her gifts on him; made him successful; móre, made him hard-working, gave him the instant audience his soul loved, gave him a season or two of success rapid beyond men's experience — the excitement, the applause, the laughter which wore out his eager heart.

I believe if he had lived in the eighteenth century he would have chosen to be a highwayman — one like his favorite hero, "Bold Brennan of the Moor," who was also an outlaw for his country's sake, and robbed the rich to give to the poor. I can hear him now coming home at night trolling a verse of the ballad by which Brennan is enshrined for ever in the hearts of the country people. It was a common thing for him to come home in the small hours. Everyone loved him and would fain hold him of their company, and he was not one to break away from friendly detaining hands. The night might be wild and wet, cold and snowing, as it might be balmy and set with stars. To

A MEMORY

him all weather came alike. He was initiate in the things of Nature, and the wind and the rain were his brothers. You would hear him a long way off trolling his song. It might be "The White Cockade," as it often was:

*King Charles is King James's son,
And from a royal race is sprung,
Then up with the shout and out with the blade,
And viva la! the White Cockade.*

Or it might be "Brennan on the Moor:"

*'Tis of a gallant highwayman
A story I will tell.
His name was Billy Brennan,
In Ireland he did dwell.
All on the Kilworth mountain
He runned his wild career,
And many a goodly gentleman
Before him shook with fear.*

CHORUS:

*Brennan on the Moor, boys,
Brennan on the Moor,
Bold and undaunted stood
Young Brennan on the Moor.*

*One day, as Billy Brennan
From the mountains came down,
He met the Mayor of Limerick
One mile outside the town.
The Mayor he knew his features,
"Young man, I think," says he,
"Your name is Willie Brennan:
You must come along with me."*

*Now Brennan's wife had gone to town
Provisions for to buy,
And as she saw her Willie dear
She began to wail and cry.
"Give me," says he, "that tenpenny,"
And as the words he spoke
She handed him a blunderbuss
From underneath her cloak.*

*Now Brennan with that blunderbuss
A tale he did unfold,
He made the Mayor of Limerick
To yield him up his gold;
Five hundred pounds in silver
He took from off him there,
And with his horse and saddle
To the mountains did repair.*

A MEMORY

And so on in the interminable rhymed history of him who, like Robin Hood :

*A brace of loaded pistols
He carried night and day.
He never robbed a poor man
Upon the King's highway ;
But what he took from off the rich,
Like Turpin and Black Bess,
He did divide it to assist
Poor widows in distress.*

Or it might be a "Come-all-ye," describing the latest execution, sung in fairs and sold as a broad-sheet by the ballad-singers. He would come in possibly — nay, rather oftener than not — soaked through in that land of mild, perpetual rain, but at peace with the elements and all the world. And seeing his dear face you forgave him straightway the dinner that waited in vain, the long evening of expectation, with the blank of his absence like a sore at the heart of it, the late hour, the broken slumber. Always he was worth waiting for, even into the small hours. He might have set your orderly life all askew, but here he

was at last, loving and giving, carrying very often material gifts, always bubbling over with jests and stories, ready to sit down and unpack the budget of delightful things, although he was wet through and you were in your dressing-gown and conscious of the extinguished fire. He would button-hole you to your bedroom door with the stories which were to colour your dreams with the gold of laughter. And of course everything was forgiven. You had but to lay eyes on him to forgive him.

His humour was usually humane. Occasionally it was impish, elfish, a marsh-fire which those it played over forgot as soon as it had fled elsewhere. At its most mischievous it left no scar. You laughed with him when he was merry at your expense. There was never the rancour behind the jibes that desired to push the point home. There was something impersonal, aloof, in his quips and cranks. Among the most touchy people in the world he was a chartered mocker.

I have said he was wild, wild as the west wind that's mild and kind. Little hands one did not see plucked at him; little voices

A MEMORY

one did not hear, voices of the winds and waters, were incessantly calling him out from civilisation, to leave the dull world behind and come out and be free.

Once it was a brook singing over its golden bed, brown as amber, yellow gold in its high lights. We leant over a bridge on the country road looking down into its depths. He glanced back at the mountains from which it came, and there was an ache of longing in his voice.

"I never saw a little stream yet," he said, "that I didn't want to track it to its source. It'll have bubbled up maybe between the fronds of a hart's tongue fern and made a little pool. And then maybe it slipped over a rock and fell in a golden fringe. Do you remember the streams at Killarney falling over the rocks that edge the roads? And after that it'll have made a channel for itself, and gone singing down the dark glens and foaming about the boulders. It's a trout stream. If you watched it long enough up there you'd see the fin of a trout where he was skulking in the pools. I wonder at all how the first trout came in it."

Then he was moved to tell me the story

of the Molaga trout. He was full of folk-lore, and ever ready to impart it. His knowledge made the very stones live.

"Did you ever hear of St. Molaga? It was he brought the honey-bees into Ireland. There is a well he blessed in County Cork. There was a little silver trout used to swim round and round in it, and he too was blessed and called St. Molaga's trout. The waters possessed the power of healing, but it was unlawful to use it for any culinary purpose, and it couldn't be got to boil. To this day they say in the County Cork if a kettle is long a-boiling: 'It must have St. Molaga's trout in it.'"

I got him to write a delicious piece of folk-lore, "The Trencher-man and the Molaga Trout," which appeared in *The Speaker*. It was to have been the first of many. He was in love with the idea of making a book of these stories, racy and delightfully humorous and simple, gathered from the lips of the old peasants with whom he found it so easy to make friends.

"I'd like it to appear in America," he said. "I'd love to think of the old people reading it that emigrated out there."

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But the book never got further than the second story, which also appeared in *The Speaker*, I think. He was no great one for making books. He needed the instant audience of the eyes and the lips and the throats, that looked and smiled and roared their applause at him.

That day at the brookside he turned away as one who shoulders his burden again regretfully. "I ought to have been at the Four Courts half an hour ago," he said; "I've a big case to make up." It was the case that made his reputation, that set him on that brilliant way of easy yet strenuous effort which combined with the excitement and the applause he loved to break his heart.

Another time we met a stalwart gipsy man, a "tinker," as they call them in Ireland, a big, bullet-headed fellow with a great shock of grizzled curls and a face burnt almost black by the sun. There was some suggestion of the Wine-God in his looks, the Wine-God disguised for amorous adventures perhaps. We trudged the length of a long mountain road with him. The "tinker" was sprung of a line of famous pipers: his father had won the All-Ireland prize at the

Feis. For all his pagan looks the fellow was a Christian gipsy and would receive Christian burial when he died, although the house was not built that could harbour him for long, nor the roof-tree that he would not feel an intolerable oppression between him and the sky.

They talked of many things and I listened. The tinker's forbears had fought in the Rebellion of '98, on the right side, be sure. Wasn't his grandfather killed at Oulart Hollow? He talked of "the troubles," looking from side to side in the twilight as though "the troubles" were not over and done with long ago, as though the bronze hedgerow might yet conceal a lurking spy or an armed yeoman. He was going over the mountains to Bray, walking. Some time in the early morning he would be there. He had my companion's last half-crown — this was before the great case brought the briefs raining upon him — and as he shambling off with his long trotting gait up the mountain side, a long, long look of sore desire for the freedom of the night and the hills followed him.

"He'll find a cave in the hills to-night," said the longing voice, "and he'll fill it with dead leaves for a bed. The stars and the moon'll be looking in at him."

After we had gone a little way the subject recurred.

"Did you notice," he asked, "the great walk of him from the hips? And did you see how his brogues were slit down to give his foot freedom in walking? It would be grand to be out with him on the hillside to-night listening to his stories and songs. A grand life for a man surely."

Those were golden days and golden walks long ago. One never knew how good they were while they lasted. Once as we went along he prodded at a tiny beetle with his stick.

"Look at him, now," he said, "he's putting out the two little spurs behind to defend himself. There isn't an old woman in the County Cork that wouldn't run after him and stamp him out of existence. He is the *daire dhoul*, the devil's beetle, and they think there's a hundred days' indulgence for killing him. You never heard of the *daire*

dhoul? Why surely you did. It betrayed our Lord to the Jews. He had escaped from His enemies and was out in the open country. As He passed through a cornfield the men were sowing the corn. Because of His passing it sprang into golden grain, and bent itself into long avenues to let Him pass, closing up after Him so that none should know the way he had gone. The apple-boughs, covered with blossom, bent low before Him, and the blossom ripened to yellow, golden fruit. The next day came His pursuers and found the reapers reaping the corn. 'Did such a man pass this way?' they asked. 'He passed, but when the corn was being sown,' said the reapers. Now they had gathered a basket of the fruit to refresh them, and on an apple there sat the *daire dhoul*. He put up his evil little black head, and said in Irish, '*Inagh, inagh*,' which means 'Yesterday, yesterday.' That is why he is the *daire dhoul*, the devil's beetle, and accursed."

From this it would be an easy transition to Conall Carnach. I can hear the soft, wailing Cork brogue and remember the very smells, the dead leaves and the smoke from

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the mountains where the heather was on fire, of that autumn day years ago.

“You know that Conall Carnach, the Lord of Dunseverick, was present at the Crucifixion. No? Well, all the nations of the earth were represented there, and Conall was for the Irish. He was a famous wrestler, and that is how he came to leave his castle of Dunseverick, near Ballycastle, on the Antrim coast. He travelled all over the world wrestling, and took part in the gladiatorial games in Rome. Well, he came on to Jerusalem, the very day of the Crucifixion. He came up with the crowd just at the time Veronica gave the napkin to our Lord to dry His face, and he saw Simon help Him to carry the Cross. Every one noticed his great size and beauty as he stood below the Cross. While he stood there a drop of our Lord’s blood fell upon his head. That was the first Christian baptism of all Ireland. Then Conall saw the soldiers flinging dice for the seamless garment, and said, ‘Let me have a throw.’ They agreed, and his throw of the dice won the prize. But he refused it, because he had been profoundly impressed by the august death he had witnessed.

They say that each representative of the Gentile nations present that day was privileged to render our Lord a service. And Conall Carnach's was — you know they say the Angel rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre for the Resurrection; no, then, it was Conall Carnach that put his great shoulder to it and sent it spinning. He was the first to bring to Ireland the name of Christ and the story of the Crucifixion."

And then again it would be some homely saint of his own family.

"Saints! Sure my own great-grandmother's uncle, Father O'Brien, was as great a saint as any of them. We have his pyx in the family still. There was a young girl at Muskerry dying of a decline, and he was sent for to anoint her. She was the only support of her old father and mother, and a good girl she was. Well, he had given her the last Sacraments and was leaving her when she caught at his skirt. 'God can do more than that for me,' she says. 'If you believe it stand up and help your parents,' he said, holding out his hand to her. She

stood up, sound in life and limb, and lived to be an old woman. There was a little boy, a cripple, at Kilcrea, and one day he sat on a ditch overlooking a field where there was a hurling match. He was very sad because he could never play at hurley. There were two men playing and one cursed the other. The little cripple on the ditch rebuked the curser for the honour of God. Now, while this was happening, there came by Father O'Brien. 'Why aren't you hurling, boy?' he asked. The boy pointed to his crooked limb for answer. 'Go and play,' said Father O'Brien, 'go and play.' That was all, but the little cripple jumped from the ditch, ran into the field, and joined the play, using his crutch for a *camán*.

"Those were the penal days, and it was not easy for a priest to live at all with a price on his head. But there were good Protestants who said it was hard that people shouldn't be allowed their own creed and their own minister, and it was in and out of their houses Father O'Brien lived. It was at the fairs he used to meet his people, and move about among them as a drover, finding out when marriages were called for or christen-

ings, and giving word of the place where the Mass was to be said. Well, a scoundrel named R—— made a plot to seize and betray Father O'Brien. The family is known and disrespected in Cork to this day. He got half a dozen scoundrels to assist him, and they joined the priest as he was leaving the fair of Ballinhassig and entered into conversation with him. Now, they had to cross the Lee at a certain point by stepping-stones, and midway the stream R—— tripped Father O'Brien, and he fell and lay in the stream. *And all the time he was carrying the Sacred Host in his breast.* Well, they tied him up, and then and there took him to the house of a gentleman named Gillman, who was a magistrate, or whatever corresponded to it in those days. He was one of the good Protestants, and when the scoundrels had taken themselves off he gave Father O'Brien his liberty. Of the men who had betrayed him all died violent deaths within a few years, except old R——, and he lived and apparently thrived. But in his old age he was following a fox-hunt, and he was seen hard after the fox crossing the hill of Garvagh. Well, it might as well have been

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a hill into the other world; for, after he had topped it, tale or tidings of him no man ever heard. His horse was found drowned some time after, just floating out of the river to the sea.

"I could tell you scores of such things. It's a thousand pities you haven't the Irish. The Munster peasants are full of stories, not only of Christ and the saints, but of heroes and chieftains. Did you ever hear that Hugh O'Neill only said two tender things in all his life of hard fighting? One was to his wife, Mabel Bagnal, the other was to Hugh O'Donnell. It was at the Battle of Kinsale. Over all the roar and tumult of the battle the old chieftain could be heard calling to the young one, who was flashing through the battle like a brand, '*Thororn-na-cha, Aodh! Thororn-na-cha!*' which is, 'Keep close to me, Hugh! Keep close to me, Hugh!' Then there was a grand man, Donal the Bastard, of whom I have many stories. But I will tell you those another day."

"Write them down," I used to say, "write them down." But he was not much good

at writing down, and he was ready to give his stories away to anyone who wanted them, although at the back of his mind he had the intention always of writing some day. Indeed, he began a novel or two and laid them aside. There was nothing he possessed he would not give away. You had only to tell him that you had an order for a story and could not find a plot, an occasion for an article and could not find a subject, and he was thoughtful for a moment. Then he would give you his plot or his subject. Perhaps one part of the truth about him was that he could not write for money. In his College days he shouldered the editorship and practically all the work of an archæological journal which brought him little fame and no fortune—only he loved doing it. Later, when he was on Circuit—solicitors clamouring for him—he would find time to write long letters, full of stories; now and again a folk-story or a legend.

“You should weave it into a ballad, the story of St. Gobnet, the little patroness of Ballyvourney, after whom so many County Cork girls are called. It is Englished, ‘Abby.’ She was a sea-king’s daughter and

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he was a shrine-robber. She had no sisters or mother, and used to keep to the ship with him and his men. Once she was ashore in a wood and God sent an angel to tell her to fly from her father, and to give her life to Himself. Well, she would, but she knew of no place of security. The angel told her to travel and give no rest to the sole of her foot until she would find nine white deer asleep. She went on and she came to a place and found *three*. She fondled them a while and then went on to Kilgobnet, where she found *six*. Here she stayed until they were all good friends. Then she left her heart with them and went on to Ballyvourney. There, as God willed it, she found the *nine*, and she made her dwelling with them and they became her sisters, and she died in their midst and is buried there."

Everywhere he went he met with the most delicious adventures. "Wherever he goes, something is bound to happen," said one who preceded him into the shadows. Indeed, all life conspired to make mirth and adventure for him.

For some two years before his death he

suffered greatly, but put his sufferings out of sight. A superhuman courage enabled him to keep the signs and portents of those years from the one who loved him best. He was ordered rest, rest, rest—an impossible prescription to him. "Sure, he wouldn't take care of himself," said a homely lover of his since, "and who could blame him? I hear that when he came out of Court there was a row of cars waiting for him, and the people fighting for who'd have him." Probably there was some truth in the picturesque statement. He was the best and gayest company in all the world. On Circuit he was always called up to the Judges' table. He could be as audacious as he liked with the big men of his own or another profession. He only provoked smiles and honest laughter wherever he went.

He used to come in bubbling over with stories. In the midst of them a heart spasm would seize him, and he would sink on a chair and turn his face away. As soon as it had gone by he would begin anew. He could not but laugh and make others laugh, even between one heart spasm and another.

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At this time as always he was giving away with both hands. He had the most beautiful generosity, and to need money was the passport to his purse. He had the curious local patriotism which belongs to Cork men only out of all Ireland — why, let the student of history explain — and every Cork man was his brother, in a more special way than that which made every poor devil his brother. He knew to the full the exquisiteness of giving. The study he would have thought least worth while would have been the study of finance. All sorts of poor devils were helped on by his bounty. Since his death the most hopeless, helpless, pushed-to-the-wall waiter, incapable of waiting, met me with a watery eye in a Dublin hotel.

“I saw you with — him,” he said. “Ah sure, he was a terrible loss to me. I’d never have kept goin’ only for him. And sure we’re down in the dirt, myself and the wife and childher since he was taken.”

“Listen, sir,” said a Dublin carman when he lay dying, hailing a friend of his — “how is he?”

“He could hardly be worse and live.”

"Ah, well, may the blessing of God go with him! I wouldn't have a horse and car to-day only for him."

"Tell me now," the friend said curiously, "did he help you to buy back the horse or the car?"

"Well, indeed, sir, to tell you the truth, he put a bit of money into both for me — may the Lord reward him!"

One always knew where he was by the milestones of his gifts. When a basket full of speckled silver trout, or a little barrel of oysters from the Atlantic, or a little jar of whisky arrived by the parcel post, one always knew by the post-mark just how far he had got on Circuit. One laughed then, tenderly affectionate, over those late nights of long ago, when he would come sliding in in the small hours and disarm your righteous indignation by a present put into your hand before the cool and cutting speeches you had prepared could begin to be uttered.

While he lay dying briefs rained upon his bed, with gifts, for everyone loved him, and the carriages of the Judges stood outside his door. They sent him comfortable

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messages. He was to take time to get well. No matter what happened he would be looked after. One of the hardest-headed men in all Ireland, the most implacable of enemies, but soft-hearted somewhere out of sight, came in mysteriously in the dusk of the evening, and left a banknote for a large amount on his bed. "The other fellows quarrel over who will devil for me," he wrote in his last letter, "and toss me over the guineas with a laugh." "The little nurse who's looking after me," he wrote, "woke me out of a most beautiful sleep last night to give me my sleeping draught."

During the last month he had terrible attacks of heart-failure in which he seemed to die only to rally amazingly. Between the attacks he was writing to the clamouring solicitors that he hoped to be back at work in a week, in ten days. He was lying at a seaside hotel where they had sent him, in the hope that he might sleep, the one chance for him. The dispensary doctor who was called up in the bitter November nights, and would come running through the village dressing himself as he ran—the Dublin specialist whose motor-car would come

whizzing almost as soon as he had been rung up on the telephone—they fought death hand to hand for him, for love. Neither would accept money for their services. They are splendidly Quixotic, those Irish doctors.

Just the last day he had to live, when he seemed better, he was heard saying over to himself the verses of the *Dies Iræ*, muttering between, "What a coward I am! What a coward I am!" He, that had fought pain and death with such superb courage, never crying out, never complaining, through the immense suffering.

"I never saw men crying openly as they did at his funeral," someone wrote. "Everyone was crying." Indeed, people cry yet at his grave, his grave in the village street below the mountains, the street which he used to trudge so cheerfully in the nights and the bad weather. His grave is never alone. He was generous and friendly indiscriminately to the just and the unjust. "The beggars loved him," someone said, "and there's always a beggar praying by his grave." The last time I was there a friend of his who was visiting the grave suddenly

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burst into tears, and apologised for his weakness. "It was seeing the crocuses coming up above him," he said; "I couldn't bear to see them, realising that he'd never return."

He knew everybody between the four seas of Ireland, and was friendly with them all. Between the four seas was lamentation when he died. Love covers his grave like roses.

TO THE BELOVED DEAD.

YOU Light of Laughter happiest,
In the old times what joy, what jest!
But now the times are sad and new,
And all our laughter gone with you.
The old times were ever the best.

You were as wild as the West Wind,
The West Wind that's wild and kind.
Nothing could bind you, nothing keep.
You are gone over the hills of sleep.
Be free, beloved, as the West Wind.

You gave with both hands over and over,
And every poor man was your lover.
Who ever turned from you unfed,
Heavy-hearted, uncomforted?
May God repay you over and over!

O Light of Youth, 'tis well you go
Before the winter and the snow;
For who could think of you, a mourner,
An old man in a chimney corner,
Quiet and glad of rest? Ah, no!

You Light of Laughter, wild and giving,
Who could wish you sad length of living?
But all our laughter goes with you,
You and the Morning and the dew.
'Tis a sad world of care and grieving.

THE VOICES.

I KNOW now what I did not know,
The trouble in the wind and rain
That all night long sigh and complain.

All night in the lonely night
The Voices spake to one another,
Voice of the Rain and Wind her brother.

Ah! what a world where youth must die!
Wind and Rain went crying and grieving;
Half for the dead and half for the living.

When I was young I did not know
What the Wind cried in the rainy weather,
The Wind and the Rain crying together.

THE SPENDTHRIFT.

HE left so little, did you say?
He had so brief a time to stay,
'Twas hardly worth his while to gather
Dross of our little earthly day.

The things that other people prize
He gave to others, being wise,
Being so heavenly-foolish rather,
That kept his gains for Paradise.

Hardly a keepsake did he leave,
And all his gold was fugitive.
He kept those things that will not perish,
For him the widow and orphan grieve.

He gave with a light laugh indeed,
As he and gold were ill agreed;
Held it the poorest thing to cherish,
Save that it filled another's need.

He had his Pilgrim's Scrip of Hope,
And Living Waters in his cup,
The Staff of Faith that still suffices
The stumbling soul to lift it up.

Being so soon a traveller,
Of earthly things he had no care;
But on the road that's Paradise's
He went the lighter, being bare.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

TIME was we trusted the New Year
The Old Year's wrongs t' undo :
When you and I were young, my dear,
And could begin anew.

We said : "The old trouble's at an end,
The good times lie before :"
Now we have griefs no year will mend,
And an unopening door.

We shall not run to greet the year,
Nor feel our hearts leap up
With the old happy hope, my dear ;
The fond, irrational hope.

The year will bring the birds and flowers,
The ripening sun and rain :
Never an hour of all her hours
Will bring the dead again.



THE END OF A LITTLE BOOK FOR JOHN
O'MAHONY'S FRIENDS, WRITTEN BY
KATHARINE TYNAN, AND PRINTED
FOR THE AUTHOR BY THE CRAFTS-
MEN OF THE PEAR TREE PRESS,
HARTING, PETERSFIELD,
HAMPSHIRE.
JANUARY,
MCMVI.

The Bibelot

IT is surely a happy coincidence that our somewhat belated reissue of these three *Letters to Dead Authors*—for they have long been on our list as desirable additions to what we have already given of Mr. Lang's writings in these pages and elsewhere—should come out at the very moment when an enlarged edition under the revised title of *New and Old Letters to Dead Authors* has been published by the Longmans, (London, 1907.) In this augmented but not entirely complete edition¹ a new Preface greets us, and altogether a younger generation has before it a collection of "exercises in the art of dipping" as Mr. Lang in unjust self depreciation calls his work, which to the best of our knowledge and belief makes a strong bid for the suffrages of the Gentle Reader in the Twentieth century—and after.

For in our many re-readings of these delightful essays in epistolary parody we cannot resist their inescapable, indefinable charm. The melancholy sweetness of the

¹ See Bibliographical Note.

*Linus-song is theirs : theirs too the colour,
the atmosphere of an old forgotten day.*

*The three Letters we select are as we view
them in perfect touch with the three poets in
three distant and different ages born—
Theocritus, Horace and Ronsard. If ever
the august shades of these mighty masters
were to be addressed or their acquaintance
made possible, it surely would be in some
such happy wise as these epistles afford. So
sure is their technique, the adroitness of
address so sufficient to the subject in hand
that the persuasive style of the thing is felt
to be of the same indubitable excellence,
associated with Stevenson in his *Virginibus*
Puerisque, with Hazlitt at his best, and
with Lamb always.*



FOR AUGUST :
MODERNITY IN VERSE
BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

THREE LETTERS TO DEAD AUTHORS :

- I. TO PIERRE DE RONSARD
- II. TO THEOCRITUS
- III. TO Q. HORATIUS FLACCUS

By
ANDREW LANG.

*O friend, receive my thanks for Letters writ
To Authors Dead by Andrew Lang, who writes
To each dead master in the strain most fit
To speak his loving homage, and indites
Therewith memorials of his perfect taste
And soul of art in times of shallow haste.*

*If chosen friends reveal the mind of man,
That seeks for fellows of its noblest powers,
A hero's mind beneath the words we scan
Here clothes itself for us in learning's flowers ;
Not less heroic for that undismayed
Its deepest thought in smiles it has arrayed.*

T. FAIRMAN ORDISH.

SERIOUSLY, are you not the typical embodiment of the idea that rules among cultivated people to-day? To take oneself seriously, is to them the only unpardonable sin, and the one vice which they actively dislike. The style is all, they say. Whether what is said be new or true—or false and trite—is nothing, so that it is said well. Fortunately, if you satisfy the most critical in your style, you have much more than empty elegance. You have been held to be a highly-revised edition of Mr. George Augusta Sala; but these qualified expressions have more unlikeliness than similarity; and, to place you hastily, we must create a new group, and set you as the leader of a school that is modern to its core, with sentiments of reverence for tradition, and scholarly disgust for the *nouveau riche*, and the new democracy alike; yet, by curious fate, attracting the very class it feigns to repel. Read with adoration to-day, we wonder if the charm of your witchery will last—if, like Charles Lamb, you will be the favourite of centuries yet unborn. It matters little, perhaps. You have an audience vast—not unintelligent—and enthusiastic now; in the future the secret of immortality is beyond us, as the greater secret was alike to Omar and to his lover, who echoes his cadences with such rare felicity, that it needs a moment's consideration before one can recall whether it was Omar, FitzGerald, or Lang, who wrote certain quatrains that help us to waste our time well.

Letters to Eminent Hands. By "i". (1892.)

I.

TO PIERRE DE RONSARD.

(PRINCE OF POETS.)

MASTER AND PRINCE OF POETS,—As we know what choice thou madest of a sepulchre (a choice how ill fulfilled by the jealousy of Fate), so we know well the manner of thy chosen immortality. In the Plains Elysian, among the heroes and the ladies of old song, there was thy Love with thee to enjoy her paradise in an eternal spring.

*Là du plaisant Avril la saison immortelle
Sans eschange le suit,
La terre sans labeur, de sa grasse mamelle,
Toute chose y produit;
D'enbas la troupe sainte autrefois amoureuse,
Nous honorant sur tous,
Viendra nous saluer, s'estimant bien-beureuse
De s'accointer de nous.*

There thou dwellest, with the learned lovers of old days, with Belleau, and Du Bellay, and Baïf, and the flower of the maidens of Anjou. Surely no rumour reaches thee, in that happy place of reconciled affections,

no rumour of the rudeness of Time, the
despite of men, and the change which stole
from thy locks, so early grey, the crown of
laurels and of thine own roses. How differ-
ent from thy choice of a sepulchre have
been the fortunes of thy tomb!

I will that none should break
The marble for my sake,
Wishful to make more fair
My sepulchre!

So didst thou sing, or so thy sweet numbers
run in my rude English. Wearied of Courts
and of priories, thou didst desire a grave
beside thine own Loire, not remote from

The caves, the founts that fall
From the high mountain wall,
That fall and flash and fleet,
With silver feet.
Only a laurel tree
Shall guard the grave of me;
Only Apollo's bough
Shall shade me now!

Far other has been thy sepulchre: not in
the free air, among the field flowers, but in
thy priory of Saint Cosme, with marble for
a monument, and no green grass to cover
thee. Restless wert thou in thy life; thy

dust was not to be restful in thy death. The Huguenots, *ces nouveaux Chrétiens qui la France ont pillée*, destroyed thy tomb, and the warning of the later monument,

ABI, NEFASTE, QUAM CALCAS HUMUM
SACRA EST,

has not scared away malicious men. The storm that passed over France a hundred years ago, more terrible than the religious wars that thou didst weep for, has swept the column from the tomb. The marble was broken by violent hands, and the shattered sepulchre of the Prince of Poets gained a dusty hospitality from the museum of a country town. Better had been the laurel of thy desire, the creeping vine, and the ivy tree.

Scarce more fortunate, for long, than thy monument was thy memory. Thou hast not encountered, Master, in the Paradise of Poets, Messieurs Malherbe, De Balzac, and Boileau — Boileau who spoke of thee as *Ce poète orgueilleux trébuché de si haut!*

These gallant gentlemen, I make no doubt, are happy after their own fashion, backbiting each other and thee in the Para-

dise of Critics. In their time they wrought thee much evil, grumbling that thou wrotest in Greek and Latin (of which tongues certain of them had but little skill), and blaming thy many lyric melodies and the free flow of thy lines. What said M. de Balzac to M. Chapelain? "M. de Malherbe, M. de Grasse, and yourself must be very little poets, if Ronsard be a great one." Time has brought in his revenges, and Messieurs Chapelain and De Grasse are as well forgotten as thou art well remembered. Men could not always be deaf to thy sweet old songs, nor blind to the beauty of thy roses and thy loves. When they took the wax out of their ears that M. Boileau had given them lest they should hear the singing of thy Sirens, then they were deaf no longer, then they heard the old deaf poet singing and made answer to his lays. Hast thou not heard these sounds? have they not reached thee, the voices and the lyres of Théophile Gautier and Alfred de Musset? Methinks thou hast marked them, and been glad that the old notes were ringing again and the old French lyric measures tripping to thine ancient harmonies, echoing and

replying to the Muses of Horace and Catullus. Returning to Nature, poets returned to thee. Thy monument has perished, but not thy music, and the Prince of Poets has returned to his own again in a glorious Restoration.

Through the dust and smoke of ages, and through the centuries of wars we strain our eyes and try to gain a glimpse of thee, Master, in thy good days, when the Muses walked with thee. We seem to mark thee wandering silent through some little village, or dreaming in the woods, or loitering among thy lonely places, or in gardens where the roses blossom among wilder flowers, or on river banks where the whispering poplars and sighing reeds make answer to the murmur of the waters. Such a picture hast thou drawn of thyself in the summer afternoons.

Je m'en vais pourmener tantost parmy la plaine,
Tantost en un village, et tantost en un bois,
Et tantost par les lieux solitaires et cois.
J'aime fort les jardins qui sentent le sauvage,
J'aime le flot de l'eau qui gazouille au rivage.

Still, methinks, there was a book in the hand of the grave and learned poet; still

thou wouldst carry thy Horace, thy Catullus,
 thy Theocritus, through the gem-like weather
 of the *Renouveau*, when the woods were
 enamelled with flowers, and the young
 Spring was lodged, like a wandering prince,
 in his great palaces hung with green :

Orgueilleux de ses fleurs, enflé de sa jeunesse,
 Logé comme un grand Prince en ses vertes maisons !

Thou sawest, in these woods by Loire side,
 the fair shapes of old religion, Fauns,
 Nymphs, and Satyrs, and heard'st in the
 nightingale's music the plaint of Philomel.
 The ancient poets came back in the train
 of thyself and of the Spring, and learning
 was scarce less dear to thee than love ; and
 thy ladies seemed fairer for the names they
 borrowed from the beauties of forgotten
 days, Helen and Cassandra. How sweetly
 didst thou sing to them thine old morality,
 and how gravely didst thou teach the lesson
 of the Roses ! Well didst thou know it,
 well didst thou love the Rose, since thy
 nurse, carrying thee, an infant, to the holy
 font, let fall on thee the sacred water
 brimmed with floating blossoms of the Rose !

Mignonne, allons voir si la Rose,
 Qui ce matin avoit desclose

Sa robe de pourpre au soleil,
A point perdu ceste vespree
Les plis de sa robe pourpree,
Et son teint au votre pareil.

And again,

La belle Rose du Printemps,
Aubert, admoneste les hommes
Passer joyeusement le temps,
Et pendant que jeunes nous sommes,
Esbattre la fleur de nos ans.

In the same mood, looking far down the future, thou sangest of thy lady's age, the most sad, the most beautiful of thy sad and beautiful lays; for if thy bees gathered much honey 'twas somewhat bitter to taste, like that of the Sardinian yews. How clearly we see the great hall, the grey lady spinning and humming among her drowsy maids, and how they waken at the word, and she sees her spring in their eyes, and they forecast their winter in her face, when she murmurs "'Twas Ronsard sang of me."

Winter, and summer, and spring, how swiftly they pass, and how early time brought thee his sorrows, and grief cast her dust upon thy head.

Adieu ma Lyre, adieu fillettes,
Jadis mes douces amourettes,

Adieu, je sens venir ma fin,
 Nul passetemps de ma jeunesse
 Ne m'accompagne en la vieillesse,
 Que le feu, le licet et le vin.

Wine, and a soft bed, and a bright fire: to this trinity of poor pleasures we come soon, if, indeed, wine be left to us. Poetry herself deserts us; is it not said that Bacchus never forgives a renegade? and most of us turn recreants to Bacchus. Even the bright fire, I fear, was not always there to warm thine old blood, Master, or, if fire there were, the wood was not bought with thy bookseller's money. When autumn was drawing in during thine early old age, in 1584, didst thou not write that thou hadst never received a sou at the hands of all the publishers who vended thy books? And as thou wert about putting forth thy folio edition of 1584, thou didst pray Buon, the bookseller, to give thee sixty crowns to buy wood withal, and make thee a bright fire in winter weather, and comfort thine old age with thy friend Gallandius. And if Buon will not pay, then to try the other booksellers, "that wish to take everything and give nothing."

Was it knowledge of this passage, Master, or ignorance of everything else, that made certain of the common steadfast dunces of our days speak of thee as if thou hadst been a starveling, neglected poetaster, jealous forsooth of Maître François Rabelais? See how ignorantly M. Fleury writes, who teaches French literature withal to them of Muscovy, and hath indited a Life of Rabelais. "Rabelais était revêtu d'un emploi honorable; Ronsard était traité en subalterne," quoth this wondrous professor. What! Pierre de Ronsard, a gentleman of a noble house, holding the revenue of many abbeys, the friend of Mary Stuart, of the Duc d'Orléans, of Charles IX., *he is traité en subalterne*, and is jealous of a frocked or unfrocked *manant* like Maître François! And then this amazing Fleury falls foul of thine epitaph¹ on Maître François and cries, "Ronsard a voulu faire des vers méchants; il n'a fait que de méchants vers." More truly saith M. Sainte-Beuve, "If the good Rabelais had returned to Meudon on the day when this epitaph was made over the

¹ Ronsard's epitaph for Rabelais was merely a translation from the Greek Anthology.

wine, he would, methinks, have laughed heartily." But what shall be said of a Professor like the egregious M. Fleury, who holds that Ronsard was despised at Court? Was there a party at tennis when the king would not fain have had thee on his side, declaring that he ever won when Ronsard was his partner? Did he not give thee benefices, and many priories, and call thee his father in Apollo, and even, so they say, bid thee sit down beside him on his throne? Away, ye scandalous folk, who tell us that there was strife between the Prince of Poets and the King of Mirth. Naught have ye by way of proof of your slander but the talk of Jean Bernier, a scurrilous, starveling apothecary, who put forth his fables in 1697, a century and a half after Maître François died. Bayle quoted this fellow in a note, and ye all steal the tattle one from another in your dull manner, and know not whence it comes, nor even that Bayle would none of it and mocked its author. With so little knowledge is history written, and thus doth each chattering brook of a "Life" swell with its tribute "that great Mississippi of falsehood," Biography.

II.

TO THEOCRITUS.

“**S**WEET, methinks, is the whispering sound of yonder pine-tree,” so, Theocritus, with that sweet word *ἄδύ*, didst thou begin and strike the keynote of thy songs. “Sweet,” and didst thou find aught of sweet, when thou, like thy Daphnis, didst “go down the stream, when the whirling wave closed over the man the Muses loved, the man not hated of the Nymphs”? Perchance below those waters of death thou didst find, like thine own Hylas, the lovely Nereids waiting thee, Eunice, and Malis, and Nycheia with her April eyes. In the House of Hades, Theocritus, doth there dwell aught that is fair, and can the low light on the fields of asphodel make thee forget thy Sicily? Nay, methinks thou hast not forgotten, and perchance for poets dead there is prepared a place more beautiful than their dreams. It was well for the later minstrels of another day, it was well for Ronsard and Du Bellay to desire a dim Elysium of their own, where the sunlight comes faintly through the shadow of the earth, where the poplars are duskier, and

the waters more pale than in the meadows of Anjou.

There, in that restful twilight, far remote from war and plot, from sword and fire, and from religions that sharpened the steel and lit the torch, there these learned singers would fain have wandered with their learned ladies, satiated with life and in love with an unearthly quiet. But to thee, Theocritus, no twilight of the Hollow Land was dear, but the high suns of Sicily and the brown cheeks of the country maidens were happiness enough. For thee, therefore, methinks, surely is reserved an Elysium beneath the summer of a far-off system, with stars not ours and alien seasons. There, as Bion prayed, shall Spring, the thrice desirable, be with thee the whole year through, where there is neither frost, nor is the heat so heavy on men, but all is fruitful, and all sweet things blossom, and evenly meted are darkness and dawn. Space is wide, and there be many worlds, and suns enow, and the Sun-god surely has had a care of his own. Little didst thou need, in thy native land, the isle of the three capes, little didst thou need but sunlight on land and sea.

THEOCRITUS

Death can have shown thee naught dearer than the fragrant shadow of the pines, where the dry needles of the fir are strewn, or glades where feathered ferns make "a couch more soft than Sleep." The short grass of the cliffs, too, thou didst love, where thou wouldst lie, and watch, with the tunny watcher till the deep blue sea was broken by the burnished sides of the tunny shoal, and afoam with their gambols in the brine. There the Muses met thee, and the Nymphs, and there Apollo, remembering his old thralldom with Admetus, would lead once more a mortal's flocks, and listen and learn, Theocritus, while thou, like thine own Comatas, "didst sweetly sing."

There, methinks, I see thee as in thy happy days, "reclined on deep beds of fragrant lentisk, lowly strewn, and rejoicing in new stript leaves of the vine, while far above thy head waved many a poplar, many an elm-tree, and close at hand the sacred waters sang from the mouth of the cavern of the nymphs." And when night came, methinks thou wouldst flee from the merry company and the dancing girls, from the fading crowns of roses or white violets, from

the cottabos, and the minstrelsy, and the Bibline wine, from these thou wouldst slip away into the summer night. Then the beauty of life and of the summer would keep thee from thy couch, and wandering away from Syracuse by the sandhills and the sea, thou wouldst watch the low cabin, roofed with grass, where the fishing-rods of reed were leaning against the door, while the Mediterranean floated up her waves, and filled the waste with sound. There didst thou see thine ancient fishermen rising ere the dawn from their bed of dry seaweed, and heardst them stirring, drowsy, among their fishing gear, and heardst them tell their dreams.

Or again thou wouldst wander with dusty feet through the ways that the dust makes silent, while the breath of the kine, as they were driven forth with the morning, came fresh to thee, and the trailing dewy branch of honeysuckle struck sudden on thy cheek. Thou wouldst see the Dawn awake in rose and saffron across the waters, and Etna, grey and pale against the sky, and the setting crescent would dip strangely in the glow, on her way to the sea. Then, methinks, thou

THEOCRITUS

wouldst murmur, like thine own Simaetha, the love-lorn witch, "Farewell, Selene, bright and fair; farewell, ye other stars, that follow the wheels of the quiet Night." Nay, surely it was in such an hour that thou didst behold the girl as she burned the laurel leaves and the barley grain, and melted the waxen image, and called on Selene to bring her lover home. Even so, even now, in the islands of Greece, the setting Moon may listen to the prayers of maidens. "Bright golden Moon, that now art near the waters, go thou and salute my lover, he that stole my love, and that kissed me, saying 'Never will I leave thee.' And lo, he hath left me as men leave a field reaped and gleaned, like a church where none cometh to pray, like a city desolate."

So the girls still sing in Greece, for though the Temples have fallen, and the wandering shepherds sleep beneath the broken columns of the god's house in Selinus, yet these ancient fires burn still to the old divinities in the shrines of the hearths of the peasants. It is none of the new creeds that cry, in the dirge of the Sicilian shepherds of our time, "Ah, light of mine eyes, what gift shall I

send thee, what offering to the other world ?
 The apple fadeth, the quince decayeth, and
 one by one they perish, the petals of the
 rose. I will send thee my tears shed on a
 napkin, and what though it burneth in the
 flame, if my tears reach thee at the last."

Yes, little is altered, Theocritus, on these
 shores beneath the sun, where thou didst
 wear a tawny skin stripped from the rough-
 est of he-goats, and about thy breast an old
 cloak buckled with a plaited belt. Thou
 wert happier there, in Sicily, methinks, and
 among vines and shadowy lime-trees of
 Cos, than in the dust, and heat, and noise
 of Alexandria. What love of fame, what
 lust of gold tempted thee away from the
 red cliffs, and grey olives, and wells of black
 water wreathed with maidenhair ?

The music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy country tone ;
 Lost it too soon, and learned a stormy note
 Of men contention tost, of men who groan,
 Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
 It failed, and thou wast mute !

What hadst *thou* to make in cities, and
 what could Ptolemies and Princes give thee
 better than the goat-milk cheese and the

Ptelean wine? Thy Muses were meant to be the delight of peaceful men, not of tyrants and wealthy merchants, to whom they vainly went on a begging errand. "Who will open his door and gladly receive our Muses within his house, who is there that will not send them back again without a gift? And they with naked feet and looks askance come homewards, and sorely they upbraid me when then have gone on a vain journey, and listless again in the bottom of their empty coffer they dwell with heads bowed over their chilly knees, where is their drear abode when portionless they return." How far happier was the prisoned goat-herd, Comatas, in the fragrant cedar chest where the blunt-faced bees from the meadow fed him with food of tender flowers, because still the Muse dropped sweet nectar on his lips!

Thou didst leave the neat-herds and the kine, and the oaks of Himera, the galingale hummed over by the bees, and the pine that dropped her cones, and Amaryllis in her cave, and Bombyca with her feet of carven ivory. Thou soughtest the City, and strife with other singers, and the learned write still on thy quarrels with Apollonius and

Callimachus, and Antagoras of Rhodes. So ancient are the hatreds of poets, envy, jealousy, and all unkindness.

Not to the wits of Courts couldst thou teach thy rural song, though all these centuries, more than two thousand years, they have laboured to vie with thee. There has come no new pastoral poet, though Virgil copied thee, and Pope, and Phillips, and all the buckram band of the teacup time; and all the modish swains of France have sung against thee, as the *sow challenged Athene*. They never knew the shepherd's life, the long winter nights on dried heather by the fire, the long summer days, when over the parched grass all is quiet, and only the insects hum, and the shrunk burn whispers a silver tune. Swains in high-heeled shoon, and lace, shepherdesses in rouge and diamonds, the world is weary of all concerning them, save their images in porcelain, effigies how unlike thy golden figures, dedicate to Aphrodite, of Bombyca and Battus! Somewhat, Theocritus, thou hast to answer for, thou that first of men brought the shepherd to Court, and made courtiers wild to go a Maying with the shepherds.

III.

TO Q. HORATIUS FLACCUS.

IN what manner of Paradise are we to conceive that you, Horace, are dwelling, or what region of immortality can give you such pleasures as this life afforded? The country and the town, nature and men, who knew them so well as you, or who ever so wisely made the best of those two worlds? Truly here you had good things, nor do you ever, in all your poems, look for more delight in the life beyond; you never expect consolation for present sorrow, and when you once have shaken hands with a friend the parting seems to you eternal.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis?

So you sing, for the dear head you mourn has sunk, for ever, beneath the wave. Virgil might wander forth bearing the golden branch "the Sibyl doth to singing men allow," and might visit, as one not wholly without hope, the dim dwellings of the dead and the unborn. To him was it permitted to see and sing "mothers and men, and the bodies outworn of mighty heroes, boys and

unwedded maids, and young men borne to the funeral fire before their parents' eyes." The endless caravan swept past him — "many as fluttering leaves that drop and fall in autumn woods when the first frost begins; many as birds that flock landward from the great sea when now the chill year drives them o'er the deep and leads them to sunnier lands." Such things was it given to the sacred poet to behold, and the happy seats and sweet pleasancesses of fortunate souls, where the larger light clothes all the plains and dips them in a rosier gleam, plains with their own new sun and stars before unknown." Ah, not *frustra pius* was Virgil, as you say, Horace, in your melancholy song. In him, we fancy, there was a happier mood than your melancholy patience. "Not, though thou wert sweeter of song than Thracian Orpheus, with that lyre whose lay led the dancing trees, not so would the blood return to the empty shade of him whom once with dread wand, the inexorable God hath folded with his shadowy flocks; but patience lighteneth what heaven forbids us to undo."

Durum, sed levius fit patientia!

Q. HORATIUS FLACCUS

It was all your philosophy in that last sad resort to which we are pushed so often —

“With close-lipped Patience for our only friend,
Sad Patience, too near neighbour of Despair.”

The Epicurean is at one with the Stoic at last, and Horace with Marcus Aurelius. “To go away from among men, if there are Gods, is not a thing to be afraid of; but if indeed they do not exist, or if they have no concern about human affairs, what is it to me to live in a universe devoid of gods or devoid of providence?”

An excellent philosophy, but easier to those for whom no Hope had dawned or seemed to set. Yes! it is harder than common, Horace, for us to think of *you*, still glad somewhere, among rivers like Liris and plains and vine-clad hills, that

Solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.

It is hard, for you looked for no such thing.

*Omnes una manet nox
Et calcanda semel via leti.*

You could not tell Mæcenas that you would meet him again; you could only promise to tread the dark path with him.

*Ibimus, ibimus,
Utcunque præcedes, supremum
Carpere iter comites parati.*

Enough, Horace, of these mortuary musings. You loved the lesson of the roses, and now and again would speak somewhat like a death's head over your temperate cups of Sabine *ordinaire*. Your melancholy moral was but meant to heighten the joy of your pleasant life, when wearied Italy, after all her wars and civic bloodshed, had won a peaceful haven. The harbour might be treacherous; the prince might turn to the tyrant; far away on the wide Roman marches might be heard, as it were, the endless, ceaseless monotone of beating horses' hoofs and marching feet of men. They were coming, they were nearing, like footsteps heard on wool; there was a sound of multitudes and millions of barbarians, all the North, *officina gentium*, mustering and marshalling her peoples. But their coming was not to be to-day, nor to-morrow, nor to-day was the budding Empire to blossom into the blood-red flower of Nero. In the lull between the two tempests of Republic and Empire your

odes sound "like linnets in the pauses of the wind."

What joy there is in these songs! what delight of life, what an exquisite Hellenic grace of art, what a manly nature to endure, what tenderness and constancy of friendship, what a sense of all that is fair in the glittering stream, the music of the waterfall, the hum of bees, the silvery grey of the olive woods on the hillside! How human are all your verses, Horace! what a pleasure is yours in the straining poplars, swaying in the wind! what gladness you gain from the white crest of Soracte, beheld through the fluttering snowflakes while the logs are being piled higher on the hearth. You sing of women and wine—not all whole-hearted in your praise of them, perhaps, for passion frightens you, and 'tis pleasure more than love that you commend to the young. Lydia and Glycera, and the others, are but passing guests of a heart at ease in itself, and happy enough when their facile reign is ended. You seem to me like a man who welcomes middle age, and is more glad than Sophocles was to "flee from these hard masters" the passions. In the fallow leisure

of life you glance round contented, and find all very good save the need to leave all behind. Even that you take with an Italian good-humour, as the folk of your sunny country bear poverty and hunger.

Durum, sed levius fit patientia !

To them, to you, the loveliness of your land is, and was, a thing to live for. None of the Latin poets your fellows, or none but Virgil, seem to me to have known so well as you, Horace, how happy and fortunate a thing it was to be born in Italy. You do not say so, like your Virgil, in one splendid passage, numbering the glories of the land as a lover might count the perfections of his mistress. But the sentiment is ever in your heart and often on your lips.

Me nec tam patiens Lacedæmon,
Nec tam Larissæ percussit campus opimæ,
Quam domus Albuneæ resonantis
Et præceps Anio, ac Tiburni lucus, et uda
Mobilibus pomaria rivis.¹

¹ "Me neither resolute Sparta nor the rich Larissæan plain so enraptures as the fane of echoing Albunea, the headlong Anio, the grove of Tibur, the orchards watered by the wandering rills."

Q. HORATIUS FLACCUS

So a poet should speak, and to every singer his own land should be dearest. Beautiful is Italy with the grave and delicate outlines of her sacred hills, her dark groves, her little cities perched like eyries on the crags, her rivers gliding under ancient walls; beautiful is Italy, her seas, and her suns: but dearer to me the long grey wave that bites the rock below the minster in the north; dearer are the barren moor and black peat-water swirling in tauny foam, and the scent of bog myrtle and the bloom of heather, and, watching over the lochs, the green round-shouldered hills.

In affection for your native land, Horace, certainly the pride in great Romans dead and gone made part, and you were, in all senses, a lover of your country, your country's heroes, your country's gods. None but a patriot could have sung that ode on Regulus, who died, as our own hero died on an evil day, for the honour of Rome, as Gordon for the honour of England.

Fertur pudicæ conjugis osculum,
Parvosque natos, ut capitis minor,
Ab se removisse, et virilem
Torvus humi posuisse voltum :

Donec labantes consilio patres
 Firmaret auctor nunquam alias dato,
 Interque mærentes amicos
 Egregius properaret exul.

Atqui sciebat, quæ sibi barbarus
 Tortor pararet: non aliter tamen
 Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
 Et populum reditus morantem,

Quam si clientum longa negotia
 Dijudicata lite relinqueret,
 Tendens Venafranos in agros
 Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum.¹

We talk of the Greeks as your teachers.
 Your teachers they were, but that poem
 could only have been written by a Roman!

1 "They say he put aside from him the pure lips of his wife and his little children, like a man unfree, and with his brave face bowed earthward sternly he waited till with such counsel as never mortal gave he might strengthen the hearts of the Fathers, and through his mourning friends go forth, a hero, into exile. Yet well he knew what things were being prepared for him at the hands of the tormentors, who, none the less, put aside the kinsmen that barred his path and the people that would fain have delayed his return, passing through their midst as he might have done if, his retainers' weary business ended and the suits adjudged, he were faring to his Venafran lands or to Dorian Tarentum."

The strength, the tenderness, the noble and monumental resolution and resignation — these are the gifts of the lords of human things, the masters of the world.

Your country's heroes are dear to you, Horace, but you did not sing them better than your country's Gods, the pious protecting spirits of the hearth, the farm, the field; kindly ghosts, it may be, of Latin fathers dead or Gods framed in the image of these. What you actually believed we know not, *you* knew not. Who knows what he believes? *Parcus Deorum cultor* you bowed not often, it may be, in the temples of the state religion and before the statues of the great Olympians; but the pure and pious worship of rustic tradition, the faith handed down by the homely elders, with *that* you never broke. Clean hands and a pure heart, these, with a sacred cake and shining grains of salt, you could offer to the Lares. It was a benignant religion, uniting old times and new, men living and men long dead and gone, in a kind of service and sacrifice solemn yet familiar.

*Te nihil attinet
Tentare multa cæde bidentium*

*Parvos coronantem marino
Rore deos fragilique myrto.*

*Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
Non sumptuosa blandior hostia
Mollivit aversos Penates
Farre pio et saliente mica.¹*

Farewell, dear Horace; farewell, thou wise and kindly heathen; of mortals the most human, the friend of my friends and of so many generations of men.

¹ "Thou, Phidyle, hast no need to besiege the gods with slaughter so great of sheep, thou who crownest thy tiny deities with myrtle rare and rosemary. If but the hand be clean that touches the altar, then richest sacrifice will not more appease the angered Penates than the duteous cake and salt that crackles in the blaze."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

LETTERS TO DEAD AUTHORS.

I.

ENGLISH EDITIONS.

The *first* edition in book form of these essays, (originally contributed to the *St. James Gazette*,) contained Letters I-XXII in the order given, and was published by Longmans, London, March, 1886. The *second* edition, (May, 1886, had some minor changes including one important cancel of two stanzas in the Byron letter; in it "a new preface appears, as well as the original, in which the author hints at the probable issue of another volume," a hint that was never carried out. In January, 1892, a *third*, (new and cheaper,) edition, with Longmans' imprint was called for; reissued by them in April, 1892; June, 1896, and May, 1903. Finally we have the present *fourth* edition, issued by Longmans in their Pocket Library Series, (May, 1907) containing Letters I to XXII inclusive and seven additional letters,* that first appeared in *The Chap-Book* (Chicago,) after it assumed the ill-chosen quarto *format* which so inevitably led to its extinction.

II.

AMERICAN EDITIONS.

Turning to American editions we find that Scribners reprinted the London text of XXII *Letters*, New

* The "New" Letters are (1) To Master Geoffrey Chaucer; (2) To James Anthony Froude, Esq.; (3) To Horace Walpole; (4) To the Reverend Master John Barbour; (5) To Mr. Samuel Richardson; (6) To Henry Fielding, Esq.; (7) To Martin Farquhar Tupper, Esq.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

York, 1886. In 1893 the same firm got out in their Cameo Series a "copyright" edition containing four additional Letters,* written, as Mr. Lang states in his preface, "by special request" of said firm and, as one might almost presume "for business purposes only," seeing that Letters I-XXII inclusive could *not* be copyrighted and were and are open to whosoever might choose to reprint any or all of them.

Of this Cameo edition 212 numbered copies were struck off on Van Gelder paper from the electrotype plates, octavo, bound in half vellum boards. It was the day of "large paper" rarities and 212 copies did not seem, as it does now, an unconscionable quantity to offer "the elect" in this "very special" *format*!

III.

To sum up the situation. It will be seen from the foregoing statement of facts that both American and English admirers of Mr. Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors* are still unable to procure all of them in a single volume of any one edition issued, but in order to possess the series complete *must* at least purchase (a) The American "Cameo" edition of 1893, or its later reissue; and (b) the London Pocket edition of 1907 of the New and Old Letters. Let us hope that (c) with as many more "new" or "old" Letters as Mr. Lang can bring together will at some not distant day see the light in a single edition of one, two or three volumes, even.

* The Letters included here not found elsewhere are addressed (1) To Maister Iohn Knox; (2) To the Reverend Increase Mather; (3) To Homer; (4) To Samuel Pepys, Esq.



The Bibelot

IT is matter for regret that Mr. Arthur Symons as a whole does not intend to reissue his *Studies in Two Literatures*, (1897). In the ten years that have gone to his making as poet and critic, as well as in the ten previous to the date of these *Studies*, there exists the unbroken record of an inlook upon literature and art which is simply unique: in England and America his equal is alike somewhat sadly to seek. A courage in conviction that has never bowed down to current claptrap, Mr. Symons writes with appreciative candour upon characters as remote from present-day morality as Casanova: he has also produced love-poetry which bids fair to be remembered when every contemporary composer of mock-erotics is deservedly forgotten.

As in the dedication of *Studies in Two Literatures* to his friend George Moore, Symons sets up and conforms to one vital necessity: "I have tried to give my own report of whatever I have chosen to consider; I have not troubled to find out whether it tallies with the reports of other people who have considered the same things." And

again: "Have either of us ever doubted that a work of art has but one reason for existence, that it should be a work of art, a moment of the eternity of beauty?" In these two utterances one comes across the law and gospel of all expression be it in words or in the arts at large. Precisely this clarity of mind enables him to assay and assess the abiding poetics of William Ernest Henley, who after much senseless clatter is here seen not as the author of a spiteful letter on Stevenson but as one of the few singers who have had something to say and who say it unforgettably and finally.

In choosing therefore this essay from a discarded volume we believe we are doing substantial justice to the man whose *In Hospital and London Voluntaries* can never ultimately be ignored by the lover of the poetry which inheres in the squalor and splendour of great cities, or, indeed, is inherent in modern love and modern life.



FOR SEPTEMBER:
A LITTLE BOOK FOR
MARY GILL'S FRIENDS
BY KATHARINE TYNAN.

MODERNITY IN VERSE

By

ARTHUR SYMONS.

MODERNITY IN VERSE.

IN the poetry of Mr. Henley, so interesting always, and at times so admirable, I find an example to my hand of the quality of modernity in verse. For a man of such active and eager temperament, a writer of such intellectual vivacity, Mr. Henley's literary baggage is singularly small. It consists of two volumes of verse, a volume of prose criticisms, some essays about painting, a few prefaces, and one or two plays written in collaboration with Robert Louis Stevenson. To these we should perhaps add the *National Observer*, a weekly paper written in collaboration with a number of impressionable young men. Ten years ago Mr. Henley's name was unknown. Journalists knew him as a clever journalist, and that was all. It was only by an accident that the editor (at that time) of the *Magazine of Art*, the brilliant reviewer of the *Athenæum*, was discovered by the general public in the character of a poet. The accident was somewhat curious. In 1887 a volume of *Ballades and Rondeaux* appeared in the Canterbury Series under the editorship of Mr. Gleeson White. It was a collection of all

the tolerable work in French forms that could be found in English and American literature, and its consequence (for our salvation) was such an idigestion of ingenuity that scarcely a ballade, scarcely a rondeau, has seen the light since its publication. As a curiosity the book had its interest; containing, as it did, some of the splendid work of Mr. Swinburne, the exquisite work of Mr. Dobson, it could not but have its value; but, after all, its main interest and value lay in some five-and-thirty pieces signed W. E. Henley. Mr. Gleeson White explained in his preface that he had discovered these pieces in a society paper called *London*, a paper which had two years of a very vivid existence during 1877-78, and that he had made his selection without the slightest idea that they were all by one author, and that author Mr. Henley. Written in the artificial forms of the ballade, the rondeau, the villanelle, they stood out from a mass of work, mainly artificial in substance as in form, by the freshness of their inspiration, the joyous individuality of their note. One felt that here was a new voice, and a voice with capacities for a better kind of singing. It

was in answer to a demand which would take no denying (and how rarely does the British public ever make such a demand!) that *A Book of Verses* appeared in the following year. It was a complete success, was welcomed by the critics, talked about in the drawing-rooms, and even bought for ready money. In 1890 a volume of *Views and Reviews* was received with much curiosity, as a challenge that at all events had to be considered. In 1891 the play of *Beau Austin* (the work of Mr. Henley and Mr. Stevenson) was the literary sensation of the dramatic year, and, though not exactly a success on the boards, must be admitted to have presented to us the finest piece of comedy in action since *The School for Scandal*. And then, in 1892, came *The Song of the Sword*, or as it is now more appropriately named, *London Voluntaries*, another challenge, and, in some sort, a manifesto.

There is something revolutionary about all Mr. Henley's work; the very titles, the very existence, of his poems may be taken as a sort of manifesto on behalf of what is surely a somewhat new art, the art of mod-

ernity in verse. In the *London Voluntaries*, for instance, what [a sense of the poetry of cities, that rarer than pastoral poetry, the romance of what lies beneath our eyes, in the humanity of streets, if we have but the vision and the point of view ! Here, at last, is a poet who can so enlarge the limits of his verse as to take in London. And I think that might be the test of poetry which professes to be modern : its capacity for dealing with London, with what one sees or might see there, indoors and out.

To be modern[!] in poetry, to represent really oneself and one's surroundings, the world as it is to-day, to be modern and yet poetical, is, perhaps, the most difficult, as it is certainly the most interesting, of all artistic achievements. In music the modern soul seems to have found expression in Wagner ; in painting it may be said to have taken form and colour in Manet, Degas, and Whistler ; in sculpture, has it not revealed itself in Rodin ? on the stage it is certainly typified in Sarah Bernhardt. Essentially modern poetry may be said to have begun in France, with Baudelaire. The art which he invented, a perverse, self-scrutinizing,

troubled art of sensation and nerves, has been yet further developed, subtilized, volatilized, rather, by Verlaine, who still remains the typical modern poet. In England we find the first suggestions of a really modern conception of poetical art in some of the smaller and finer poems of Browning. Mr. George Meredith's *Modern Love* almost realizes an ideal. The poem stands alone in the literature of its time; moving by "tragic hints," to the cadence of an irony that achieves a quite new expression in verse, it gives voice, in that acid, stinging, bitter-sweet style made out of the very moods of these modern lovers, to all that is new, troubled, unexpressed, in the convolutions of passion, all that is strange, novel, and unexpected, in the accidents of passionate situation, among our sophisticated lovers of to-day. In quite another way Mr. Coventry Patmore has achieved wonders, not in the domestic *Angel*, but in the less popular and immeasurably superior *Unknown Eros*, by working, with that extraordinarily delicate touch of his, on the emotions and destinies of the more spiritual kind of love, which is no less, in essentials and accidentals alike,

"modern love." Had Walt Whitman only possessed the art, as he possessed, and at times revealed, the soul of poetry, it is possible that in him we should have found the typical modern poet. But his work remains a suggestion, not an accomplishment. In James Thomson we find a violent and inconsiderate attempt to deal with modern subjects, often in an old-fashioned way. He was a man of genius who never found the right utterance, but his endeavour was in the right direction. He indeed aimed at doing much of what Mr. Henley seems to me to have actually done.

To some of the writers I have named, and to some others, Mr. Henley owes not a little. The style of the "Hospital Sonnets" is founded on the style of *Modern Love*; both from the rhymed and unrhymed poems in irregular metres, it is evident that Mr. Henley has learnt something from the odes of the *Unknown Eros*; there are touches of Walt Whitman, some of the notes of Heine; there is, too, something of the exquisitely disarticulated style of Verlaine. But with all this assimilation of influences that are in the air, Mr. Henley has developed for him-

self a style that becomes in the highest degree personal, and one realizes behind it a most vigorous, distinct, and interesting personality. Alike as a human document, and as an artistic experiment, the "rhymes and rhythms" named "In Hospital" have a peculiar value. Dated from the Old Edinburgh Infirmary, 1873-75, they tell the story of life in hospital, from the first glimpse of the "tragic meanness" of stairs and corridors, through the horrors of the operation, by way of visitors, doctors, and patients, to the dizzy rapture of the discharge, the freedom of wind, sunshine, and the beautiful world. The poet to whom such an experience has come, the man, perhaps, whom such an experience has made a poet, must be accounted singularly fortunate. Of the men who rhyme, so large a number are cursed with suburban comforts. A villa and books never made a poet; they do but tend to the building up of the respectable virtues; and for the respectable virtues poetry has but the slightest use. To roam in the sun and air with vagabonds, to haunt the strange corners of cities, to know all the useless, and improper, and amusing people who are

alone very much worth knowing ; to live, as well as to observe life ; or, to be shut up in hospital, drawn out of the rapid current of life into a sordid and exasperating inaction ; to wait, for a time, in the ante-room of death : it is such things as these that make for poetry. Just as those months in prison had their influence on Verlaine, bringing out in his work a deeper note than even the passionate experiences of early life, so that hospital experience has had its influence upon Mr. Henley. The very subject, to begin with, was a discovery. Here is verse made out of personal sensations, verse which is half physiological, verse which is pathology ; and yet, at its best, poetry. It is one of the modern discoveries that "the dignity of the subject" is a mere figure of speech, and a misleading one. See what Mr. Whistler can make out of "Brock's Benefit:" in place of fireworks and vulgarity you have a harmony in black and gold, and a work of art. See what Degas can discover for you in the crossing of colours, the violent rhythm of movements, the crowded and empty spaces, of a ballet rehearsal. And so, instead of prattling about Phyllis, Mr. Hen-

ley has set himself to the task of rendering the more difficult poetry of the disagreeable. And in these curious poems, the sonnets and the "rhythms," as he calls his unrhymed verse, he has etched a series of impressions which are like nothing else that I know in verse. What an odd, and, in its way, admirable triumph of remembered and recorded sensation is this picture, for instance, "The Operation :"

You are carried in a basket,
Like a carcass from the shambles,
To the theatre, a cockpit
Where they stretch you on a table.

Then they bid you close your eyelids,
And they mask you with a napkin,
And the anæsthetic reaches
Hot and subtle through your being.

And you gasp and reel and shudder
In a rushing, swaying rapture,
While the voices at your elbow
Fade — receding — fainter — farther.

Lights about you shower and tumble,
And your blood seems crystallising —
Edged and vibrant, yet within you
Racked and hurried back and forward.

Then the lights grow fast and furious,
And you hear a noise of waters,
And you wrestle, blind and dizzy,
In an agony of effort,

Till a sudden lull accepts you,
And you sound an utter darkness . . .
And awaken . . . with a struggle . . .
On a hushed, attentive audience.

And we feel, and it seems to be by a new process that we are made to feel, the long nights of lying awake, the restlessness of the tumbled bed, the sound of a leaking cistern when, "at the barren heart of midnight," it "taps upon the heartstrings:" the long days of wondering at the spring through one's prison windows, with only the change of a new patient brought in (the man who had tried to cut his throat, the man whose spine was broken) or occasionally a visitor, the "Apparition" (who, we know, was Stevenson) the "Interlude" of a New Year's frolic among the patients. Here is verse which seems, like the violin-playing of Sarasate, to be made out of our nerves; verse which, if it almost physically hurts us, does so in common with many of our favourite renderings of the arts.

"In Hospital" gives us one side of Mr. Henley's talent, and it throws a vivid light on the conditions under which so much brave work has been done. For Mr. Henley, of all the poets of the day, is the most strenuously certain that life is worth living, the most eagerly defiant of fate, the most heroically content with death. There is, indeed, something of the spirit of Walt Whitman in his passion for living, his acceptance of the hour when man,

Tired of experience, turns
To the friendly and comforting breast
Of the old nurse, Death.

His special "note," in the earlier work particularly, is a manly Bohemianism, a refreshingly reckless joy in the happy accident existence. Always insistently modern, with such curious use of "hansoms," of fifth-floor windows," of bathers that "bob," of "washermaids" in the midst of "a shower of suds," he has set some of the most human of emotions to a music that is itself curiously modern.

There is a wheel inside my head
Of wantonness and wine,

A cracked old fiddle is grunting without ;
 But the wind with scents of the sea is fed,
 And the sun seems glad to shine.

The sun and the wind are akin to you,
 As you are akin to June ;
 But the fiddle ! . . . it giggles and buzzes about,
 And, love and laughter ! who gave him the cue ? —
 He's playing your favourite tune.

There, is a snatch, a jingle, which, slight as one may call it, seems to me to give a particular, well-known, hardly defined sensation with ingenious success. It is a sensation which is so vague in itself, so vague and delicious, a frivolous, an inconstant, an inconsequent sensation, born of chance and happy idleness, and a pleasant and unimportant memory, that to render it requires a more genuine attack of what we call inspiration than I know not how many fine, sober-pacing sonnets, marching to order. Songs like this, and like so many of Mr. Henley's, are only possible to a rare union of a very special temperament (more often found in people who are not writers) and a very special artistic endowment. There are poets who could express everything if they could only feel anything ;

others who feel acutely, but can never give out in poetry what they have received in sensation. Perhaps the typical example of the latter was the late Lord Lytton. A diplomatist, a man of the world, a traveller, he was a diligent student of life, a man of many capacities, many adventures, with infinite opportunities and the keenest desire to profit by them. His personal appreciation of the human comedy was immense; his own part in it was constant, considerable, and to himself always an excitement. Yet, after all, he was never able to strike the personal note in verse: it is only from some stray suggestion that one divines the genuine emotion that has doubtless really awakened this music which he plays to us with studied fingers on a borrowed lute. A large part of contemporary verse is, of course, concerned with quite other issues, and does not even try to do what may well seem the one thing worth doing, the one thing left to be done.* This, which Stevenson has done in prose, Mr. Henley has done in verse. One might call it personal romance, the romance of oneself; just what nine-tenths of the world never discover at all,

even for private use. I feel a bourgeois solemnity in much of the really quite good, the very respectable work in verse that is done now-a-days ; bourgeois, for all its distinction, of a kind. Our fine craftsmen are aghast at passion, afraid of emotion, ashamed of frivolity ; only anxious that the sentiment as well as the rhyme should be right. It is the bourgeois, perhaps I should say the genteel, point of view : poetry from the clubs for the clubs. I am inclined to believe that no good poetry was ever written a in club armchair. Something in the air of those ponderous institutions seems to forbid the exercise of so casual a freak as verse. And with Mr. Henley it is indeed casual ; casual as one's moods, sensations, caprices ; casual as the only aspect of fate that we are quite certain of.

To say this is not to deny to Mr. Henley some of the deeper qualities of song. His outlook on life is joyous, in spite of misfortune ; his outlook on destiny and death is grave, collected, welcoming.

Crosses and troubles a-many have proved me.
One or two women (God bless them !) have loved me.
I have worked and dreamed, and I've talked at will.

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Of art and drink I have had my fill.
I've comforted here, I've succoured there.
I've faced my foes, and I've backed my friends.
I've blundered, and sometimes made amends.
I have prayed for light, and I've known despair.
Now I look before, as I look behind,
Come storm, come shine, whatever befall,
With a grateful heart and a constant mind,
For the end I know is the best of all.

There, is a sort of epilogue, or last will and testament, and it is very explicit. Prizing in life much that is merely delightful, and the charm of passing moments, what he prizes most of all is the emotion of vital deeds, the ecstasy of conflict, the passion of love, of patriotism :

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?

the vivid sense of life "at the very top of being." To quote some of his own words, it is "the beauty and the joy of living, the beauty and the blessedness of death, the glory of battle and adventure, the nobility of devotion — to a cause, an ideal, a passion even — the dignity of resistance, the sacred

quality of patriotism." He is ashamed of none of the natural human instincts, and writes of women like a man, without effeminacy and without offence, content to be at one with the beneficent seasons, the will of nature. And has he not written, once and for all, the song of the soul of man in the shadow of the unknown? Such a song is the equivalent of a great deed.

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate,
 I am the captain of my soul.

But I find myself returning to the *London
 Voluntaries* as perhaps the most individual,

the most characteristically modern, and the most entirely successful, of Mr. Henley's work in verse. Here the subject is the finest of modern subjects, the pageant of London. Intensely personal in the feeling that transfuses the picture, it is with a brush of passionate impressionism that he paints for us the London of midsummer nights, London at "the golden end" of October afternoons, London cowering in winter under the Wind-Fiend "out of the poisonous east," London in all the ecstasy of spring. The style is freer, the choice of words, the direction of rhythms, more sure, the language more select and effectual in eloquence, than elsewhere. There is no eccentricity in rhythm, no experimentalizing, nothing tentative. There is something classical, a note (shall we say?) of *Lycidas*, in these most modern of poems, almost as if modernity had become classical. The outcome of many experiments, they have passed beyond that stage into the stage of existence.

Revolutionary always, Mr. Henley has had a wholesome but perilous discontent with the conventions of language and of verse. He is an artist who is also a

critic, and the book of *Views and Reviews*, striking on its own account, has its value also in illustration of his artistic principles, preferences, and innovations. That book ("less a book," the author tells us, "than a mosaic of scraps and shreds recovered from the shot rubbish of some fourteen years of journalism") shows us an active and varied intelligence, precipitately concerned with things in general, very emphatic in likes and dislikes, never quite dispassionately, always acutely, honestly, eagerly. His characteristics of feeling and expression, and not any reasoned or prejudiced partiality, make him the champion or the foe of every writer with whom he concerns himself. Brilliant, original, pictorial, his style tires by its pungency, dazzles by its glitter. Every word must be emphatic, every stroke must score heavily, every sentence must be an epigram or a picture or a challenge. With a preference, he tells us, for the "unobtrusive graces," for "tranquil writing," for "eloquence without adjectives," he is consistent in his negation of all these ideals of the urbane style. And, with this, immense cleverness, an acuteness that

pierces and delights to pierce, an invention of phrases that is often of the essence of criticism, an extensive knowledge, extensive sympathies. His vocabulary is unusually large, and it is used, too recklessly indeed, but in a surprisingly novel, personal way. Turning to the poems, we find many of the faults of the prose, but we find also that the artist in verse is far more careful than the craftsman in prose, and that he has curbed himself to a restraint in the debauch of coloured and sounding words, still sufficiently coloured and sounding for an equally novel and personal effect. What Mr. Henley has brought into the language of poetry is a certain freshness, a daring straightforwardness and pungency of epithet, very refreshing in its contrast with the traditional limpness and timidity of the respectable verse of the day. One feels indeed at times that the touch is a little rough, the voice a trifle loud, the new word just a little unnecessary. But with these unaccustomed words and tones Mr. Henley does certainly succeed in flashing the picture, the impression upon us, in realizing the intangible, in saying new things in a new and fascinating manner.

Here, for instance, is an impression of night and the sea, in their mood of deadly companionship :

A desolate shore,
The sinister seduction of the moon,
The menace of the irreclaimable sea.

Flaunting, tawdry and grim,
From cloud to cloud along her beat,
Leering her battered and inveterate leer,
She signals where he prowls in the dark alone,
Her horrible old man,
Mumbling old oaths and warming
His villainous old bones with villainous talk —
The secrets of their grisly housekeeping
Since they went out upon the pad
In the first twilight of self-conscious Time :
Growling, obscene and hoarse,
Tales of unnumbered ships,
Goodly and strong, companions of the Advance,
In some vile alley of the night
Waylaid and bludgeoned —
Dead.

Deep cellared in primeval ooze,
Ruined, dishonoured, spoiled,
They lie where the lean water-worm
Crawls free of their secrets, and their broken sides
Bulge with the slime of life. Thus they abide,
Thus fouled and desecrate,
The summons of the Trumpet, and the while
These Twain, their murderers,

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Unravined, imperturbable, unsubdued,
Hang at the heels of their children — she aloft
As in the shining streets,
He as in ambush at some fetid stair.
The stalwart ships,
The beautiful and bold adventurers!
Stationed out yonder in the isle,
The tall Policeman,
Flashing his bull's-eye, as he peers
About him in the ancient vacancy,
Tells them this way is safety — this way home.

This vigorous and most modern piece, with others of Mr. Henley's "rhythms," seems to me, in its way, so satisfying, that I sometimes wonder whether it is an unreasonable prejudice that inclines me to question the wisdom of doing without rhyme in measures that seem to demand it. The experiment has been made by Heine, by Matthew Arnold, and undoubtedly with a certain measure of success. But to do without rhyme is to do without one of the beauties of poetry, I should say one of the inherent beauties. Our ears are so accustomed to it that they have come to require it, and it is certain, for one thing, that no rhymeless lyric could become really popular, and extremely likely, for another, that an

innovation which begins by dropping rhyme will end by abandoning rhythm. It has been tried in France, persistently, most ingeniously, never, I think, successfully. The example of the French Decadents should be a warning to those in England who are anxious to loosen the bonds of verse. Everything that can be done has been done; there are treatises on poetical orchestration as well as examples of it; there is a *Pèlerin Passionné* and its little fame to boast of. Yet the really great, the really modern poet of France has always held aloof from these extravagances, and he has given his opinion very frankly on those young *confrères* who reproach him "with having kept a metre, and in this metre some cæsure, and rhymes at the end of the lines. *Mon Dieu!* he adds, "I thought I had 'broken' verse quite sufficiently." Yet, supposing even that one admits the legitimacy of the experiment, is not the inexpediency of it somewhat strongly indicated by the deeper impressiveness, the more certain mastery of the *London Volunteers* which are rhymed? There, surely, is Mr. Henley's most satisfactory work, his entirely characteristic rendering of modern

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subjects in appropriate form. A new subject, an individual treatment, a form which retains all that is helpful in tradition, while admitting all that is valuable in experiment ; that, I think, is modernity becoming classical.



The Bibelot

IT is perhaps as poet that Katharine Tynan has become best known and the most widely admired.¹ As a writer of equally delicate prose we would fain awaken in America an interest in her work, especially an interest in that portion of both her prose and verse dealing with a phase of love and sorrow touched upon by Whitman in a sentence of poignant suggestion: "The little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and was never seen again."

Hence, with its author's permission, we reprint this Little Book of Mary Gill, reference to which was made three months ago when offering a companion booklet for the friends of John O'Mahony. Conceivably in these brief memoirs, as in a still briefer tribute to the abiding worth of Lionel John-

¹ Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson's books of verse are as follows: Louise de la Vallière, and other Poems, 1885; Shamrocks, 1887; Ballads and Lyrics, 1891; Cuckoo Songs, 1894; A Lover's Breast-Knot, 1896; The Wind in the Trees: a Book of Country Verse, 1898; Collected Poems, 1901.

For a careful appreciation of her poetry see William Archer's Poets of the Younger Generation, (London, John Lane, 1902) pp. 162-175.

son,¹ there wells up an unforced natural pathos characteristic in a unique degree of almost everything Mrs. Hinkson has written concerning Death. Indeed, just this touch of "the hereafter gives its own infinite meaning" to the transparently simple utterances of verse like *Blue Eyes*, *Love Comfortless*, and *To Rose in Heaven*.

Take four lines written as far back as 1893:

"With you the years go over fleetier than words can
say,
And one shall lose her lover but the half-length of a
day;
And one shall lose her baby but 'twixt a sleep and
sleep.
The dead are glad in Heaven, the living 'tis that
weep."

Somehow such direct lyric simplicity² is mentally associated with the *Hwomely Rhymes of William Barnes*—that still unrecognized master of heartbreaking beauty—though without the Dorsetshire dialect which we fear has made of his sweetest songs almost a sealed and secret book.

¹ See *The Bibelot*, vol. X, p. 61.

² It finds joyous utterance in *Adveniat Regnum Tuum*, a lyric of heavenly and human love united which we shall prefix to *A Little Book of XXIV Carols set down for publication by us in October*.

In this booklet of love composed for Mary Gill's Friends "our hearts and our understandings follow her" just as they still follow Dr. John Brown's Aillie "into that world where there is no pain, where no one says 'I am sick.'" Here are two stanzas as applicable to Mary Gill as To Rose in Heaven :

*"I hope you will not wear in Heaven
A different face from that we knew,
Rose, like the rose that morn and even
Hath sun and dew!*

*"Wear no new face, but keep the old,
Look from your glory and your grace,
From underneath the rays of gold
With the old face!"*



FOR OCTOBER:
TWO NATURE ESSAYS
BY FIONA MACLEOD.

A LITTLE BOOK FOR
MARY GILL'S FRIENDS
By
KATHARINE TYNAN.

A LITTLE BOOK FOR MARY GILL'S FRIENDS.

IN FOND AND FAITHFUL MEMORY.

MARY GILL, who died on the 4th of May this year, 1905, was one of whom there is not much to tell to the outside world. Yet her presence in the world made a great difference to a good many people; and her passing away out of it has left it comparatively a cold place even for the happiest of us. She was a woman who had a genius of love and beneficence, a genius of the heart. She was the most tender and devoted of wives and mothers; but when one might have supposed that her arms and her heart were full there was yet room for many beyond the circle of her home. She exhaled kindness and warmth. If you came to her big bounteous house in her absence, being one of the happy ones who loved her, you were sensible of a feeling of desolation. You wandered through the rooms seeking her, with a forlorn sense of their emptiness without her. It was as though you had discovered with a little chill that the fire had gone out.

One imagines the rooms without her now,

empty of her for ever; or one does not imagine them. One turns away from that imagination to think of her in heaven, to think of her coming to greet one as of old with the warmth of a welcome which used to shine before one like a star, making the longest road to her light and easy.

Happy were those who depended on her for happiness, for she gave of the riches of her heart with both hands: there were no reservations in her love, no coldness, no halting, no timidity. Her tenderness flowed in a steady stream that constantly replenished itself within her heart. As she was to her husband and her children and her friends in their varying degrees, so was she to her dependents, to the poor, to the outside world when she came into relation with it. Her dependents, you felt, were always safe with her, safe in her kindness, her trust, her generosity. She had a beautiful, soft, warm manner; that manner which is the happy prerogative of Irishwomen. Who was like her in sympathy? And if it was but the well-earned rating of a servant, there was something of humour, and humanity, and kindness in the sound of it.

MARY GILL'S FRIENDS

In the same way if you went with her into a shop, if she bought a newspaper in the street, she spoke to those who served her in a way that will not be heard through all the shops of London to-day; unless it might be from one of Mary's countrywomen with a share of Mary's heart. For the English, and especially the English women, genuinely kind and human when you pierce through their crust of outward coldness, have an inhuman manner with their social inferiors to our way of thinking. Mary could not come in contact with any human creature without the human touch: soul met soul for an instant, though it might be a little soul in a ragged body that touched with hers.

Mary gave blessings and took blessings a hundred times a day. I remember once when she was engaging a carman to drive us from Greystones to Bray, and she set out with a pretence of chaffering with him that could have deceived no one. "Sure, I'll drive ye for the pleasure of lookin' at ye," said the rogue: and it was not mere professional roguery. It seemed a natural thing to say, to hear said, to Mary.

I can see her now in one of the big Dublin shops, where everyone knew her, going about from counter to counter with the brisk light step that was peculiarly hers. There was something so human about the way she made her purchases. It was a little picture in itself. Mary examining the article offered to her, perhaps finding it too dear, perhaps objecting to the quality, but in a soft, coaxing, remonstrating way that was delightful to hear: the smiling assistant, who knew very well that Mary was never exacting or unjust, responding with a cheerful willingness. She made the shopping of other people cold and formal by comparison, as she made their more important things cold and formal by the living life she brought to everything she did.

I can see her in a hospital. During the twenty years of a friendship which I count among the best gifts of God I was occasionally with her in her hospital-visiting. She was the ideal of a Catholic woman and lady, taking part in all Catholic good works, identifying herself with Catholic movements, yet with that sense of citizenship, of civic

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virtue which we should aspire to, ready to take part in good works not essentially Catholic.

The hospital bed by which I place her was in one of the convalescent wards attached to the Coombe Hospital. There were rugs on the floor, cushions in the chairs, coloured pictures on the walls, Mary's gifts. The shadowy, washed-out looking women were smiling as Mary included them in the talk with a wide sweep of her comprehensive humanity. The young woman by whose bed she is sitting is just out of the grip of a terrible operation. She is, as Mary says, like a sheet of paper for colour and almost for consistency; but her lips are resolute. It is about a week before Christmas. "Now, you poor thing," says Mary, "you don't really look fit to go out. Couldn't they do without you for a little while longer?" "That's what I say," says the friendly Matron, leaning easily on the end of the bed. "I was saying to her only yesterday, and the doctor was saying, that it was coming back again knocked up she'd be. We think it very wrong of her, Mrs. Gill." Mary looks

with the eye of the wife and mother at the other wife and mother. "Maybe it's doing her more harm than good," she says, softly, "to be lying here wondering what's happening to them at home." The other wife and mother turns a relaxed and grateful glance on Mary: a little sharp sob breaks from her. "Sure it's killing me, that's what it's doing," she says. "And now you'll be sensible, Nora, and not be doing any lifting or scrubbing or hard work," Mary says. They are all Nora, or Kitty, or Biddy to Mary. "Sure I won't; Pat's very kind; and the neighbours 'll give me a helpin' hand at first." The big tears roll down her cheeks, and the other women shake their heads at each other and make a sympathetic clucking sound with their tongues. And Mary goes out of the ward, leaving behind her a sense of benediction.

Again we are in a room with one lonely occupant, who is awaiting a terrible operation, and is sitting in a big chair bundled up in some kind of wrapper. Mary sits by her, patting her thin hand softly, and, as one can see, sending her own warm

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humanity flowing along invisible channels of communication to bring a flush to the hollow cheek of the patient.

Those were the sheep. Afterwards we visited the — well, the flecked sheep; the poor things that were awaiting the motherhood that should be no crown of glory to them. Some of them were very young; I remember one sullen, unhappy child of fifteen. There were the most unhappy stories. So many of them were the sinned-against rather than the sinning. From one to another Mary went; just as cheerful, as kind, as consolatory as to those others, who indeed needed it less.

As she went through such places she heard stories, she saw them, she imagined them. She had mind as well as heart, and a literary instinct which manifested itself in delight in good writing. Perhaps she might have written herself if her life had not been packed so full.

We went together to the Hospice for the Dying, to the Little Sisters of the Poor, to many asylums and hospitals and refuges

for the shipwrecks of life. These visits took on a new colour in her company. The literary instinct made her see the stories, the dramas, the poems as one saw them one's self.

Then it was good, after one had given sympathy and pity, to go home with Mary to the warmth and comfort of her delightful house, one of the heavens God sets on earth. We used to say in those days that it was the happiest house in the world, with all the merry rosy children growing up about the quiet, student father and the beneficent mother.

One could never say of Mary's house or of anything else of Mary's, what Sainte Beuve said of the work of a contemporary, that God was forgotten in it. There was not a corner of that house in which God was not remembered, and the radiancy of religion hung about it as a visible light, a palpable joy. There was an altar at the head of the stair-case with a light ever burning before the statue of the Sacred Heart, which extended its hands in blessing over

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all who went up and down those happy stairs. There were always fresh flowers there. The children grew up amid prayers and sacred emblems. It was a house in which one realized how joyous a thing religion can be.

When the children began to go out into the world, and one elected to become a member of the Society of Jesus — magnificent and honourable title — the heart of her who was so sure to bleed over separations — and separations in God are often as hard to be borne, even harder, perhaps, than the ordinary human separations — gave up one of the most beloved of her children without a murmur.

I had the privilege of her love and friendship for twenty years. For that time her house was my other home. I went in and out of it without the formality of knocking: I went from room to room of it like any of its children. So familiar is it that I could tell you from memory the contents of many of its rooms. I can see the wild-flowers in the Dark Walk, as in those many Springs. I can see the fruit on the red southern wall: the peach-tree in blossom in the conserva-

tory. I can see the cherry-trees in fruit, and the lovely Siberian crab bearing its fairy-like apples; the yew hedge and the copper beech; the velvet greenness of the lawn; the quiet ordered garden, where last March, in a day of premature Spring, I sat and talked with Mary. I shall see them as long as I live; but I shall never see them with the eyes of the body any more. Nor shall I take any of the roads that used to lead me there.

We used to say that she was the happiest of women; but before the end it was God's will to give her much suffering; I had almost said, to break her heart, but that would be wrong, for she died with her great heart and her great spirit unbroken. When she was parted from him who was so dear to her, who never ceased to be her lover while he was her husband and her child, I remember that I wrote her letter after letter expecting no answer for a long time, for I knew the magnitude of the blow that had fallen upon her. But in an incredibly short space of time she was able to write to me, to lean on the heart of my friendship, to be comforted. She had that beautiful and

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rich nature which takes comfort, which is gladdened by the kindness of others even in an irreparable loss, an unassuageable sorrow.

But how lonely she was! I think of her in her loneliness that winter when the shadows crept into the big rooms so early, and he was never coming home who for all his quietness impressed himself so strongly on the lives of those about him. The loneliness was often intolerable; but it had always, like everything else about her, the thought of God in it. I almost dreaded our first meeting after Mr. Gill's death; but to my amazement I found her cheerful, loving, laughing as of old. She was too great a soul to burden others with her sorrows: and her dark hours were for herself.

Also to the last she kept the sense of humour which is the flower of life, that grows as readily in the shadow of death, in dust and ashes, as amid the gaieties and gardens. It is an incomplete nature that lacks it and her rich nature was complete. She laughed with us then, although she was dying; and she never for a moment

cast her shadow over our joys, of which she was a part. She was dying for many months, and she knew it for a long time before that day, some two months before her death, when she heard her imminent death-sentence from a doctor's lips alone, and locked it away in her heart from those who loved her best. She hinted it to me once in a letter, but, finding I was wild with alarm, she told me no more. She let me be happy as long as I could.

No record of Mary would be complete that did not tell of her generosity. She was "loving and giving," with that joy in giving which is so gracious a quality. For years she was a fairy godmother to my children, especially in evidence about Christmas and birthday times, although her love of giving did not allow her to confine herself to these seasons. I cannot imagine what Christmas would be like without her gifts. She had a great love of children and my children were almost as dear to her as her own. She was never tired of hearing of them or talking of them, or planning pleasures and surprises for them. "Ah, what a pity!" said her little god-daughter of four-and-a-half, when

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a merciless elder brother told her her god-mother was dead. What a pity indeed for the child who has lost so dear a godmother!

To please her I pretended in those latter sad days an ignorance of the serious nature of her illness which made it possible for me to write to the last letters full of everyday topics. To the very last she kept up her interest in the things I had to tell her. She sent me messages: "I love to hear of the children," and such things. Once she awoke from a short sleep: "I was just thinking that I should love Pamela (her god-daughter) to have a coat to match her pink bonnet," she said. Almost to the last she was able to laugh, and would arrest herself with a reminder that the time was too solemn for laughter. "The bravest woman I ever knew," her daughter wrote of her. She would not have prayers for her recovery, but that God's will might be done. For herself the bitterness of death was past; and her grief was only for the sorrow she was leaving behind.

She died on St. Monica's Day, the 4th of May. She was so essentially mother-hearted

that there is a strange applicability to her of the words, yet throbbing with human pain, which the militant saint wrote of his mother when she lay dead at Ostia :—

“ And then, nevertheless, I remembered what Thy handmaid used to be : her walk with Thee, how holy and good it was, and with us so gentle and long-suffering. And that it was all gone away from me now. And I wept over her and for her, over myself and for myself. And I let go my tears which I had kept in before, making a bed of them, as it were, for my heart, and I rested upon them. Because these were for Thine ears only and not for any man.”

“A sweet attractive kind of grace” was hers, and hers the “continual comfort in a face” of Sir Philip Sidney’s panegyrist.

MARY IN HEAVEN.

I CANNOT think that she is gone,
That I no more shall see
The kindest face the sun shone on,
That looked such love on me.
I cannot think it, though all day
I say it over and over
And try to see her as she lay
Under her flowery cover.

I cannot feel that Mary's gone —
Soft bosom, giving hand.
Alas, poor heart, cold as a stone,
You cannot understand
That all the years are yet to come
You must go sad, bereaven !
Heavy the way and wearisome
Since Mary's gone to heaven.

WHEN MARY DIED.

SHE only died last week, and yet
Suns might have risen and have set
A thousand: May's here like a bride,
And it was May when Mary died.

Incredible! We might last week
Have kissed her, held her, heard her speak,
Who now has travelled far, so far
Beyond the moon and the day-star.

Since she has gone all Time and Space
Have lost their meanings: Mary's face
Grows dim in distance, like a light
Far down a darkness infinite.

Last week! Why this new grief we have
Is old as Time, old as the grave:
It was and will be: darkness spread
Over the world since Mary's dead.

Last week she died. The lilac bough
Her eyes watched bud is blooming now.
The chestnut's lit her lamp since then,
And the lost cuckoo's come again.

A week ago ! O endless space
Since Mary heavenward turned her face !
And still the lilac's on the spray
That budded when she went away.

RAIN AND DEWS.

A MID the heats and chills,
The intolerable pain,
She thought of the misty hills,
The gravel wet with rain.

Rain on the garden path,
The mountains beautiful,
Amid the sweats of death
The memory kept her cool.

Darling, her dew-washed eyes
Look up and have no pain,
To mountains of Paradise
And o'er the heavenly plain.

The River of Life she sees,
Flowing all golden sweet;
She has come to the Place of Ease,
The sweet dews dabble her feet.

THE OLD DEAR WAY.

THERE'S a road I will not take,
 Though the lark's above it,
 The sweet dews love it :
Never again, for Mary's sake.

There's a house I've loved and lost,
 From garden bowers,
 At the midnight hours,
It cries to me like a lonely ghost.

An old red house, so warm and kind,
 Yet I must shun it,
 Nor think upon it,
The thought of the stranger's in my mind.

Your garden's out in bloom and fruit :
 Empty and cold,
 Where we walked of old :
Never again shall I come to it.

There are thoughts I keep apart
 Of the darling faces,
 The empty places,
Locked for ever within my heart.



THE END OF A LITTLE BOOK FOR
MARY GILL'S FRIENDS, WRITTEN BY
KATHARINE TYNAN, AND PRINTED
FOR THE AUTHOR BY THE CRAFTS-
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Finished — January, 1906.

The Bibelot

THE two Nature Essays here reprinted are the first and last of that posthumous volume wherein, as it seems to me, there is summed up and the seal set of perfected utterance on all that went before in what "Fiona Macleod" had to say to us. If any doubt existed as to the genuineness of her interpretations of cosmic and psychical beauty it surely vanishes when we come to examine her final work.

Originally printed at varying intervals in the pages of *Country Life*, as the diminishing strength of their writer permitted, these essays were first published in book form during the Spring of 1906. At once the critics conceded the high position they must always occupy in any satisfying appreciation concerning the dual personality which starting out with *Pharais* in 1894 ran the gamut of spiritual adventure and in *Where the Forest Murmurs* was brought to an untimely close.¹

¹ *Where the Forest Murmurs: Nature Essays.* By Fiona Macleod. London, 1906. Octavo: Pp. xii+350. Copies of this English Edition are imported by Scribners, New York.

At the end of the book is a fragment entitled The Star of Rest, placed there as I believe by the editor, who more than any one else knew how much it meant to the untiring soul who now had found such perfect peace. "Rest—what an oceanic word!—what depths are in it, what infinite spaces, what vast compassionate sky, what tenderness of oblivion, what husht awakenings, what quiet sinkings and fadings into peace."

Then as if to bid "the world and time farewell," these words are inscribed on the last page :

*"Dear soft, sweet breath of the hills,
Good-night!"*

May we not say of William Sharp, as Elizabeth Stuart Phelps so beautifully said of Longfellow :

*"To the hope that he has taught,
To the beauty he has wrought,
To the comfort he has been ;
To the dream that poets tell,
To the land where Gabriel
Cannot lose Evangeline ;—
Hush ! let him go."*



FOR NOVEMBER :

QUATRAINS FROM OMAR KHAYYÁM
DONE INTO ENGLISH
BY FREDERICK YORK POWELL.

TWO NATURE ESSAYS

By

FIONA MACLEOD.

WHERE THE FOREST MURMURS.

IT is when the trees are leafless, or when the last withered leaves rustle in the wintry air, creeping along the bare boughs like tremulous mice, or fluttering from the branches like the tired and starving swallows left behind in the ebbing tides of migration, that the secret of the forest is most likely to be surprised. Mystery is always there. Silence and whispers, still glooms, sudden radiances, the passage of wind and idle airs, all these inhabit the forest at every season. But it is not in their amplitude that great woodlands reveal their secret life. In the first vernal weeks the wave of green creates a mist or shimmering veil of delicate beauty, through which the missel-thrush calls, and the loud screech of the jay is heard like a savage trumpet-cry. The woods then are full of a virginal beauty. There is intoxication in the light air. The cold azure among the beech-spaces or where the tall elms sway in the east wind, is, like the sea, exquisitely desirable, exquisitely unfamiliar, inhuman, of another world. Then follow the days when the violets creep through the mosses at the base of great oaks, when the dust of

snowbloom on the blackthorn gives way to the trailing dog-rose, when myriads of bees among the chestnut-blossoms fill the air with a continuous drowsy unrest, when the cushat calls from the heart of the fir, when beyond the green billowy roof of elm and hornbeam, of oak and beech, of sycamore and lime and tardy ash, the mysterious bells of the South fall through leagues of warm air, as the unseen cuckoo sails on the long tides of the wind. Then, in truth, is there magic in the woods. The forest is alive in its divine youth. Every bough is a vast plume of joy: on every branch a sunray falls, or a thrush sways in song, or the gauzy ephemeridæ dance in rising and falling aerial cones. The wind moves with the feet of a fawn, with the wings of a dove, with the passing breath of the white owl at dusk. There is not a spot where is neither fragrance nor beauty nor life. From the tiniest arch of grass and twig the shrew-mouse will peep: above the shallowest rain-pool the dragon-fly will hang in miraculous suspense, like one of the faery javelins of Midir which in a moment could be withheld in mid-flight. The squirrel swings from branch to branch:

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the leveret shakes the dew from the shadowed grass: the rabbits flitter to and fro like brown beams of life: the robin, the chaffinch, the ousel, call through the warm green-glooms: on the bramble-spray and from the fern-garth the yellow-hammer reiterates his gladsome single song: in the cloudless blue fields of the sky the swifts weave a maze of shadow, the rooks rise and fall in giddy ascents and descents like black galleys surmounting measureless waves and sinking into incalculable gulfs.

Then the forest wearies of this interminable exuberance, this daily and nightly charm of exultant life. It desires another spell, the enchantment of silence, of dreams. One day the songs cease: the nests are cold. In the lush meadows the hare sleeps, the corn-crake calls. By the brook the cattle stand, motionless, or with long tails rhythmically a-swing and ears a-twitch above the moist amber-violet dreamless eyes. The columnar trees are like phantom-smoke of secret invisible fires. In the green-glooms of the forest a sigh is heard. A troubled and furtive moan is audible in waste undiscoverable places. The thunder-time is come. Now

in the woods may be seen and heard and felt that secret presence which in the spring months hid behind songs and blossom, and later clothed itself in dense veils of green and all the magic of June. Something is now evident, that was not evident: somewhat is entered into the forest. The leaves know it: the bracken knows it: the secret is in every copse, in every thicket, is palpable in every glade, is abroad in every shadow-thridden avenue, is common to the spreading bough and the leaning branch. It is not a rumour; for that might be the wind stealthily lifting his long wings from glade to glade. It is not a whisper; for that might be the secret passage of unquiet airs, furtive heralds of the unloosening thunder. It is not a sigh; for that might be the breath of branch and bough, of fern-frond and grass, obvious in the great suspense. It is an ineffable communication. It comes along the ways of silence; along the ways of sound: its light feet are on sunrays and on shadows. Like dew, one knows not whether it is mysteriously gathered from below or secretly come from on high: simply it is there, above, around, beneath.

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But the hush is dispelled at last. The long lances of the rain come slanting through the branches; they break, as against invisible barriers, and fall in a myriad pattering rush. The hoarse mutterings and sudden crashing roar of the thunder possess the whole forest. There are no more privacies, the secrecies are violated. From that moment the woods are renewed, and with the renewal the secret spirit that dwells within them withdraws, is not to be surprised, is inaudible, indefinitely recedes, is become remote, obscure, ineffable, incommunicable. And so, through veils of silence, and hot noons and husht warm midnights, the long weeks of July and August go by.

In the woods of September surely the forest-soul may be surprised, will be the thought of many. In that month the sweet incessant business of bird and beast lessens or is at an end. The woodpecker may still tap at the boles of gnarled oaks and chestnuts; the squirrel is more than ever mischievously gay; on frosty mornings, when the gossamer webs are woven across every bramble, and from frond to frond of the bronze-stained bracken, the redbreast tries

and retrieves the poignant new song he has somehow learned since first he flaunted his bright canticles of March and April from the meadow-hedge or the sunned greenness of the beech-covert. But there is a general silence, a present suspense, while the lime yellows, and the birch takes on her pale gold, and oak and sycamore and ash slowly transmute their green multitudes into a new throng clad in russet or dull red or sunset-orange. The forest is full of loveliness: in her dusky ways faint azure mists gather. When the fawn leaps through the fern it is no longer soundlessly: there is a thin dry rustle, as of a dove brushing swiftly from its fastness in an ancient yew. One may pass from covert to covert, from glade to glade, and find the Secret just about to be revealed . . . somewhere beyond the group of birches, beside that oak it may be, just behind that isolated thorn. But it is never quite overtaken. It is as evasive as moonlight in the hollows of waves. When present, it is already gone. When approached, it has the unhasting but irretrievable withdrawal of the shadow. In October this bewildering evasion is still more obvious, because the

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continual disclosure is more near and intimate. When, after autumns of rain and wind, or the sudden stealthy advent of nocturnal frosts, a multitude of leaves becomes sere and wán, and then the leaves strew every billow of wind like clots of driven foam, or fall in still wavering flight like flakes of windless snow, then, it is surely then that the great surprise is imminent, that the secret and furtive whisper will become a voice. And yet there is something withheld. In November itself there are days, weeks even, when a rich autumn survives. The oaks and ashes will often keep their red and orange till after St. Luke's Peace; in sheltered parts of the forest even the plane, the sycamore, and the chestnut will flaunt their thin leopard-spotted yellow bannerets. I remember coming upon a Spanish chestnut in the centre of a group of all but leafless hornbeams. There seemed to be not a leaf missing from that splendid congregation of scarlet and amber and luminous saffron. A few yards on and even the hardy beeches and oaks were denuded of all but a scattered and defeated company of brown or withered

stragglers. Why should that single tree have kept its early October loveliness unchanged through those weeks of rain and wind and frosts of midnight and dawn? There was not one of its immediate company but was in desolate ruin, showing the bare nests high among the stark boughs. Through the whole forest the great unloosening had gone. Even the oaks in hollow places which had kept greenness like a continual wave suspended among dull masses of seaweed, had begun to yield to the vanishing call of the last voices of summer. Day by day their scattered tribes, then whole clans, broke up the tents of home and departed on the long mysterious exile. Yet this sentinel at the Gate of the North stood undaunted, splendid in warrior array. The same instinct that impels the soul from its outward home into the incalculable void moves the leaf with the imperious desire of the grey wind. But as, in human life, there are some who retain a splendid youth far into the failing regions of grey hair and broken years, so in the forest life there are trees which seem able to defy wind and rain and the consuming feet of frost.

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The most subtle charm of the woods in November is in those blue spaces which lie at so brief a distance in every avenue of meeting boughs, under every enclosing branch. This azure mist which gathers like still faint smoke has the spell of silent waters, of moonlight, of the pale rose of serene dawns. It has a light that is its own, as unique as that unnameable flame which burns in the core of the rainbow. The earth breathes it; it is the breath of the fallen leaves, the moss, the tangled fern, the undergrowth, the trees; it is the breath also of the windless grey-blue sky that leans so low. Surely, also, it is the breath of that other world of which our songs and legends are so full. It has that mysteriousness, that spell, with which in imagination we endow the noon silences, the eves and dawns of faery twilights.

Still, the silence and the witchery of the forest solitudes in November are of the spell of autumn. The last enchantment of mid-winter is not yet come.

It is in "the dead months" that the forest permits the last disguises to fall away. The forest-soul is no longer an incommunicable

mystery. It is abroad. It is a communicable dream. In that magnificent nakedness it knows its safety. For the first time it stands like a soul that has mastered all material things and is fearless in face of the immaterial things which are the only life of the spirit.

In these "dead months" of December and January the forest lives its own life. It is not asleep as the poets feign. Sleep has entered into the forest, has made the deep silence its habitation : but the forest itself is awake, mysterious, omnipresent, a creature seen at last in its naked majesty.

One says lightly, there is no green thing left. That, of course, is a mere phrase of relativity. There is always green fern somewhere, even in the garths of tangled yellow-brown bracken. There is always moss somewhere, hidden among the great serpentine roots of the beeches. The ilex will keep its dusty green through the harvest winter : the yew, the cypress, the holly, have no need of the continual invasion of the winds and rains and snows. On the ash and elm the wood-ivy will hang her spiked leaves. On many of the oaks the lovely

dull green of the mistletoe will droop in graceful clusters, the cream-white berries glistening like innumerable pleiads of pearls. But these are lost in the immense uniformity of desolation. They are accidents, interludes. The wilderness knows them, as the grey wastes of tempestuous seas know a wave here and there that lifts a huge rampart of jade crowned with snow, or the long resiliency of gigantic billows which reveal smooth falling precipices of azure. The waste itself is one vast desolation, the more grey and terrible because in the mass invariable.

To go through those winter-aisles of the forest is to know an elation foreign to the melancholy of November or to the first fall of the leaf. It is not the elation of certain days in February, when the storm-cock tosses his song among the wild reefs of naked bough and branch. It is not the elation of March, when a blueness haunts the myriad unburst buds, and the throstle builds her nest and calls to the South. It is not the elation of April, when the virginal green is like exquisite music of life in miraculous suspense, nor the elation of May,

when the wild rose moves in soft flame upon the thickets and the returned magic of the cuckoo is an intoxication, nor the elation of June, when the merle above the honeysuckle and the cushat in the green-glooms fill the hot noons with joy, and when the long fragrant twilights are thrilled with the passion of the nightjar. It has not this rapture nor that delight; but its elation is an ecstasy that is its own. It is then that one understands as one has never understood. It is then that one loves the mystery one has but fugitively divined. Where the forest murmurs there is music: ancient, everlasting. Go to the winter woods: listen there, look, watch, and "the dead months" will give you a subtler secret than any you have yet found in the forest. Then there is always one possible superb fortune. You may see the woods in snow. There is nothing in the world more beautiful than the forest clothed to its very hollows in snow. That is a loveliness to which surely none can be insensitive. It is the still ecstasy of Nature, wherein every spray, every blade of grass, every spire of reed, every intricacy of twig, is clad with radiance,

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and myriad form is renewed in continual change as though in the passionate delight of the white Artificer. It is beauty so great and complex that the imagination is stilled into an aching hush. There is the same trouble in the soul as before the starry hosts of a winter night.

ROSA MYSTICA.

(AND ROSES OF AUTUMN.)

. . . *Rosa Sempiterna*
Che si dilata, rigrada, e ridole
Odor di lode al Sol. . . .

SITTING here, in an old garden by the sea, it is difficult for me to realise that the swallow has gone on her long flight to the South, that last night I heard countless teal flying overhead, and before dawn this morning the mysterious *honk-honk* of the wild-geese. A white calm prevails. A sea of faint blue and beaten silver, still molten, still luminous as with yet unsubdued flame, lies motionless beneath an immeasurable dome of a blue as faint, drowned in a universal delicate haze of silver-grey and pearl. But already a change to pale apple-green and mauve is imminent. A single tern flashes a lonely wing along a grey-green line that may be where sky and sea meet, or may be the illusion of the tide reflux from green depths. On the weedy rocks I cannot see even a sleeping seamew: on the havened stretch of yellow-white sand a dotterel runs

to and fro in sudden aimless starts, but as suddenly is still, is all but unseen with her breast against a rock covered with the blue-bloom of mussels, and now is like a shadow licked up by twilight.

Along the husht garden-ways beside me and behind me are roses, crimson and yellow, sulphur-white and pale carnation, the blood-red damask, and a trailing-rose, brought from France, that looks as though it were live flame miraculously stilled. It is the hour of the rose. Summer has gone, but the phantom-summer is here still. A yellow butterfly hangs upon a great drooping Marechal Niel: two white butterflies faintly flutter above a corner-group of honey-sweet roses of Provence. A late hermit-bee, a few lingering wasps, and the sweet, reiterated, insistent, late-autumn song of the redbreast. That is all. It is the hour of the rose.

*"C'est l'heure de la rose
L'heure d'ambre et flamme,
Quand dans mon âme
Je sens une Blanche Rose
Écluse."*

To-night the sea-wind will go moaning from the west into the dark north: before

dawn a steely frost will come over the far crests of the hills. To-morrow the garden will be desolate: a garden of phantom dreams. They have waited long, spell-bound! but the enchantment is fallen; in a few hours all shall be a remembrance. What has so marvellously bloomed thus late, so long escaped devastating wind and far-drifting rains and the blight of the sea, will pass in a night. Already, a long way off, I hear a singular, faint, humming sound, like stifled bees. So . . . the foam of storm is on the skerries of the seaward isles. Already from the north, a faint but gathering chill comes on the slanting wings of twilight. I rise with a sigh, thinking of an old forgotten refrain in an old forgotten poem:

*"Ged tha thu 'n diugh 'a d'aibheis fhuar,
Bba thu nair 'a d'aros righ—"*

*"(Though thou art to-day a cold ruin
Thou wert once the dwelling of a king.)"*

In the long history of the Rose, from the time when the Babylonians carried sceptres ornamented now with this flower now with the apple or lotus, to the coming of the

Damask Rose into England in the time of Henry VII.: from the straying into English gardens, out of the Orient, of that lovely yellow cabbage-rose which first came into notice shortly after Shakespeare's death, or from Shakespeare's own "Provencal rose," which is no other than the loved and common cabbage-rose of our gardens: from the combes of Devon to the straths of Sutherland, to that little clustering rose which flowered in Surrey meads in the days of Chaucer and has now wandered so far north that the Iclander can gather it in his brief hyperborean summer: from Keats' musk-rose —

"The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves—"

to that Green Rose which for more than half a century has puzzled the rose-lover and been a theme of many speculations . . . a thousand wise and beautiful things have been said of this most loved of flowers and not a few errors been perpetuated.

What has become of the Blue Roses to which in 1800 a French writer, Guillemeau, alludes as growing wild near Turin? They

are no less phantoms than some of the rose-allusions which the poet has made sacrosanct, that to the Rhetorician have become an accepted convention. Again, we are told and retold that the cult of the rose is a modern and not an ancient sentiment. Even, it is said, the allusions of the Latin poets are not those of lovers and enthusiasts. It is the Rose of Catullus, we are reminded, that blooms in the old Italic literature, the flower of festival, of Venus and Bacchus, alluded to more for its associations and its decorative value than for love borne to it or enthusiasm lit by it as by a fragrant flame.

All this may be so, and yet I am not persuaded that the people of ancient days did not love this flower of flowers as truly as, if perhaps differently than, we do. It is true that the ancients do not appear to have regarded nature, either in the abstract or in the particular, in the way characteristic of peoples of modern times and above all of our own time. But literary allusiveness does not reveal the extent or the measure of the love of objects and places. It is almost inconceivable, for example, that so

beauty-loving a people as the Greeks did not delight in the rose. The fact that only a mere handful of roses may be culled from all the poetry of Hellas, here a spray from Sappho, a wine-flusht cluster from Anacreon, a dew-wet bloom from Theocritus, a few wild-roses from the Anthology, an epithet from Homer, an image from Simonides or Pindar, a metaphor in some golden mouth, this paucity — so singular compared with the Rose of Poetry in our English speech, from Chaucer's "Rose of Rhone" to Mr. Yeats' "Rose on the Rood of Time," loved and sung through a thousand years. Such paucity does not necessarily mean that only a few poets casually alluded to this supreme flower, and that it was unnoticed or unloved of the many. Doubtless rose-chaplets were woven for lovers, and children made coronals, and at mourning ceremonies and marriage festivals these flowers were strewn. The very fact that Sappho called the rose the queen of flowers showed that it was distinguished from and admired among even the violets, pre-eminently the flowers of Athens. That she likened a young maiden to a rose is as indicative as when

an Arab poet likens his love to a delicate green palm, or as when a northern poet speaks of her as a pine-tree swaying in the wind or a wave dancing on the sea.

Then, again, the Rose would not have been consecrated to Venus, as an emblem of beauty : to Eros, as an emblem of love : to Aurora, as an emblem of Youth : and to Harpocrates, as an emblem of silence : if this symbolic usage were not such as would seem fit and natural. That roses, too, were in general demand is evident alone from their far-famed culture and the great trade in them at Paestum, the Lucanian town colonised by the Greek Sybarites five hundred years B. C. All mediæval and later literature is full of the beauty and fragrance of the rose, but were it not so, one could infer that the flower was held in high esteem from the fact that it has for ages been the wont of the Popes to have a golden rose exquisitely finished, and, when consecrated, to present it to some Catholic monarch as a token of special regard. Thus it seems to me that were there not a single allusion to the rose by any great poet from Homer to Sappho, from Anacreon to Theocritus,

we might yet discern the love of the ancient Greeks for this flower from, let us say, a single surviving phrase such as the anonymous lovely epitaphial prayer-poem in the Anthology:—"May many flowers grow on this newly-built tomb; not the dried-up Bramble, or the red flower loved by goats; but Violets and Marjoram, and the Narcissus growing in water; and around thee may all Roses grow."

In Persia and the East, from Hindustân to Palestine, from remotest Asia to Abyssinia and Barbary, the Rose has ever been loved and honoured. Sâdi of the Rose-garden and many another has sung of it with ecstasy. The Hindû god Indra, even Buddha himself, suffered for robbing a paradisaical garden of a rose. How suggestive it is, that the Eve of the Aztec garden of Eden sinned, not for plucking an apple but a rose: it was a fatal rose, too, that the Eve of primitive Mexican legend gathered to her undoing and that of all her descendants.

What innumerable legends centre round this flower. In every country and in either hemisphere, north of the Equator, the poet

and the myth-maker and the legend-weaver have occupied their imaginations to enhance its beauty, to deepen its significance.

Long ago Bion told how the rose sprang from the blood of the wounded Adonis, the supreme type of beauty, and of the tears of Venus. An older Hellenic legend declares that the rose was originally white, till Eros, dancing among the gods, upset a goblet of nectar upon Venus's flower, which thereupon became red. Christian legend, on the other hand, would have it that the red rose sprang from the brands which had been lighted at Bethlehem to burn to death a Christian virgin-martyr. Remote from Syria as from Greece, the Scandinavian legend arose that this flower was white till Baldur, the god of Youth and Love, bled at the coming of Christ — akin to which is a Gaelic legend, that the flower was white till a drop of Christ's blood fell from the Cross . . . a variant of which is that the robin, who plucked at the thorns in Christ's forehead till they stained its breast red, leaned exhausted against a wild white-rose on Calvary, which ever after was red as blood. I do not know the origin of the legend save

that it is Teutonic in its present colour and shape, of how the Crown of Thorns was woven of the Briar-Rose, and how the drops that fell from the thorns became blood-hued blooms. Teutonic also, I think, is the legend that Judas made a ladder of the rose-briar with which to reach the closed doors of heaven: hence why it is that the name Judas-Stairs is given to the Briar in some parts of Germany to this day, and why the scarlet hips are called *Judasbeeren*.

Most beautiful of surviving rose-customs is that akin to what is still done in some remote parts of Europe, the placing of an apple into the hand of a dead child, so that the little one may have something to play with in Paradise. I know of a dead Irish girl into whose right hand was placed a white rose, and of a drowned fisherman in whose hand was placed a red rose, symbols of spiritual rebirth and of deathless youth. Against this must be set the strange and widespread aversion to throwing a rose into a grave, or even letting one fall or be lowered there. ("It is throwing red life away" it was explained to me once, — with the grim addition, "and Death will at

once be hungry for more of the rose-thrower.")

Again, I recall an old legend of the last rose of summer, long anterior to the familiar song so named: a legend of how at Samhain (Hallow-mass) when of old was held the festival of summer ended and of winter begun, a young Druid brought a rose to the sunward Stones and, after consecration and invocation, threw it into the sea.

To-day, sitting in my old garden amid many roses, and looking westward across a waveless, a moveless sea, now of faint apple-green and fainter mauve lost in a vast luminous space of milky, violet-shadowed translucency, I dream again that old dream, and wonder what its portent then, what its ancient significance, of what the symbol now, the eternal and unchanging symbol. For nothing is more strange than the life of natural symbols. We may discern in them a new illusion, a new meaning: the thought we slip into them may be shaped to a new desire and coloured with some new fantasy of dreams or of the unspoken and nameless longing in the heart: but the symbol has seen a multitude of desires come and go

like shadows, has been troubled with many longings and baffled wings of the veiled passions of the soul, and has known dreams, many dreams, dreams as the uncounted sand, the myriad wave, the illimitable host of cloud, rain that none hath numbered. The Symbol of the Lily has been the chalice of the world's tears; the symbol of the Rose, the passion of uplifted hearts and of hearts on fire; in the symbol of the Cross has dwelled, like fragrance in a flower, the human Soul. The salt, mutable, and yet unchanging sea has been the phantom in which empires have seen Time like a shadow, the mirage by which kings have wept and nations been amorous in a great pride. The Wind, that no man has seen, on whose rushing mane no hand has been laid, and in whose mouth has been set no bridle since the world swung out of chaos on chariots of flame, . . . has not that solitary and dread creature of the deeps been fashioned in our minds to an image of the Everlasting, and in our hearts been shaped to the semblance of a Spirit?

A rose, laid on a stone-altar in the sunfire, and thrown into the sea, with strange

hymns, with supplication . . . what a symbol this of the desires that do not die with nations, the longings that outlive peoples, the grass of prayer that Time has trampled upon and left and forever leaves green and virginal?

To give that, that lovely fragrant flame of the old material earth, to the altars of the bowed spirit: to clothe it in the fire of heaven: to commit it to the unassuaged thirst of the everlasting graves of the sea.—Surely, here, an image of that Rosa Mundi which has been set upon the forehead of the world since time was, that Rose of Beauty, that Rose of Time, that Rose of the world which the passion of the soul has created as a prayer to the Inscrutable: the Rose of the Soul, of you, of me, of all that have been, of all that are, of all unborn, that we lay upon our places of prayer, and offer to the Secret Fires, and commit to desolation, and sorrow, and the salt and avid hunger of Death? What came of that mystical wedding, of the world we know and the world we do not know, by that rose of the spirit, committed thus in so great a hope, so great a faith? The Druid is not

here to tell. Faith after Faith has withered
like a leaf. But still we stand by ancestral
altars, still offer the Rose of our Desire to
the veiled Mystery, still commit this our
symbol to the fathomless, the everlasting,
the unanswering Deep.



The Bibelot

I.

IT was my great good fortune in the Spring of 1901 to spend the final two days in England at "that home of lost causes," Oxford, with Frederick York Powell. A letter of introduction from Mr. Edward Clodd scarcely prepared me for the Professor's welcome or for breakfast at his rooms the next morning; to be followed by the all too brief hours of his rare companionship ending with our dinner together and a hearty "good-bye and come again" when the Liverpool express hurried me away from him.

On my return home some little correspondence took place between us,—he was particularly well pleased with the version of Marcel Schwob's *Mimes* I was bringing out, giving me the benefit of his critical emendations,—and then without warning I came across the cabled despatch that he was dead. Friends of a day and a night we had met for the first and last time, of which there now remains only a beautiful memory.

"Atque in perpetuum frater, ave atque vale."

II.

Frederick York Powell, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford was born January 14, 1850, and died on Sunday eve, May 8, 1904, "alone, as he would have wished for the sake of others." Four days later "he was buried, by his own instructions, without any rite and without anything being said" at the grave. In this we are reminded of Whitman's burial which was also "without any rite" though not without profound public recognition. It is also good to know that Whitman was "the only man" as he once wrote, "whom I would cross the water to see;" and again he spoke of him as that "puissant and original figure, whose true greatness is even yet hardly understood by the lettered classes of his countrymen."

*Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the
little that is Good steadily hastening towards
immortality,*

*And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening
to merge itself and become lost and dead.*

"This," so his friend and biographer¹

¹ Frederick York Powell: *A Life and a Selection from his Letters and Occasional Writings* by Oliver Elton. In two volumes. Vol. I: *Memoir and Letters*, (Pp. xvi: 462). Vol. II: *Occasional Writings*, (Pp. xvi: 464). Octavo. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1906.

declares, "this was the creed of Powell at thirty-five, 'in the mid path-way of our life,' and so it remained always."

III.

In offering these Quatrains from Omar with their preface, which, as Prof. Elton points out "is the most personal confession of belief that Powell ever printed or wrote," we have done what in a characteristic letter we were once asked to do by him at a time when, so far as a public existed for anything save FitzGerald, seemed out of the question. Since then the point of view has shifted; hence a reissue in *The Bibelot* of the original XXIV Quatrains with five additional stanzas from MS. and six others "after Omar," cannot fail of genuine interest, especially as no popular edition of the *Life and Letters* is likely to appear in America. Four versions from the French¹ substantiate what we believe York Powell could have accomplished had he set himself seriously to the task of turning modern French poetry into English verse, thereby

¹ In the version printed by Prof. Elton of Paul Fort's ballade the fifth line has dropped out. We give the text as first published in *The Quad*, Oxford, Hilary Term, 1901, p. 27. The translation of *The Aubade* by Gerald of Bornelb is taken from *The Green Sheaf*, No. 10, for 1904.

enriching his native tongue to something of the same extent and poetic values found in Rossetti's incomparable Early Italian Poets. Such was not to be however, and the world of letters is all the poorer for its loss.

Is it out of place if I—who merely came on pilgrimage and fell under the sway of this man's unique personality by once hearing and seeing him plain—if I cite these lines, translated out of their Welsh Romany by Theodore Watts-Dunton?

*Scholar Gypsy, Brother, Student,
Peacefully I kiss thy forehead,
Quietly I depart and leave
Thee whom I loved—"Good-night."*

*Across death's dark stream
I give thee my hand; and what
Thou wouldst have desired for thyself
I wish thee—mayst thou sleep well."*



FOR DECEMBER :
SISTER BENVENUTA AND THE CHRIST CHILD
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEGEND
BY VERNON LEE.

QUATRAINS FROM OMAR KHAYYÁM
WITH A NOTE ON OMAR
FOUR TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH
By
FREDERICK YORK POWELL.

THE TWO TENT-MAKERS.

[*In a presentation copy of Quatrains from Omar.*]

*My Tent-maker of Naishapúr, and he,
Your Tent-maker of Tarsus by the Sea,
Concurred but in this golden Verity:—*
Τοιούτων μὲν μέλζων ἡ ἀγάπη.

F. Y. P.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

XXIV *Quatrains from Omar Set forth by F. York Powell, M. A.* Quarto. Boards. New York, 1900. (750 copies "for circulation only in the United States of America.") It was this edition which is referred to in the *Note on Omar*, with such evident vexation.

Quatrains from Omar Khayyám Rendered into English by Frederick York Powell. Oxford, Howard Wilford Bell, 1901. Quarto. Grey wrappers. Pp. 45.

This, though an authorized edition, seems to have afflicted the translator to an even greater degree than the American piracy. In the letter which I received dated Oct. 21, 1903 *in re* both editions, he wrote: "If you can put a spoke in" [their] "wheels by reprinting an authorized and attractive edition . . . I will authorize you to do so."

T. B. M.

A NOTE ON OMAR.

WHEN FitzGerald put Omar into English he did more than he knew. He revealed to us in fixed and memorable form a white, broad tract of thought many moderns and a few ancients had descried, but only in vague and cloudy delineation. Here at last it lay plain in the Persian sunlight — a field a few men have loved to stray into at times, and fewer have chosen as their camping-place. A varied field of various aspects, for Omar has many moods. Sometimes he wanders restless in the starlit night; sometimes he meditates in the chill fresh dawn till the stir of life breaks in upon his reveries; sometimes he dreams in the hot slumberous noon when all is hushed save the cicada; sometimes when the sun has set and the moon has risen in the pleasant evening, with the ripple of the brook in his ears, and the scent of the roses in his nostrils, he sings. Often he is alone with his heart; at other times he is in grave society with sages and seekers; and now and again he is the centre of a merry company, where the *saki* sees to it that the glasses are not long left empty, while the

singing-girl vies with the nightingale. Consistency is not the pride of his philosophy; only through his moods he is ever true to himself, so that though there are many facets to the jewels of his thought, the jewels themselves are all strung upon the thread of sincerity. Hence many have found sympathy in his verse and have felt that he expressed for them the secret of their own souls.

Omar is not often a preacher, seldom a prophet, occasionally a frank counsellor, always a friend. He had learnt to be content to accept men and things as they are. He would have men charitable and sincere. He had no ethical advice beyond this. He recognized that the ultimate explanation is beyond our comprehension, though he did not trouble himself to doubt its existence. He had done with systems and universal theories. He laughed at creeds and mocked at superstitions, but he welcomed facts with a gentle and humorous smile. He had no malice, no grudge against life. He was companionable in his hours, never inhuman. Of the hermit or the ascetic there was no trace in him. He was not the man to shud-

A NOTE ON OMAR

der at the beauty of women or the splendours of the earth and heavens, because Mutability has set her seal upon them all. He had no brain-made golden age to look upon with a sigh, no air-built Utopia to yearn for in vain. He knew that in himself were the limits and possibilities of his own happiness, and that fate must be faced. He only regretted that life, man's little capital, was often so ill and unprofitably invested. He would not be cajoled into despising this workaday world; the homely, simple joys within reach (not the least exquisite) should be freely and deftly grasped. The wise man is not a sad man. Man is made for happiness as well as for grief; both must needs come, and when they come they must be frankly and fearlessly met. On his thought he set no fetters: wherever Reason leads, whither Fancy dances, he will follow, exploring curiously and calmly, with firm step, amused at his discoveries but never condescending to be decoyed by the golden tale of El Dorado or the feverish quest of Bimini. Duty he did not talk much about because he practised it instinctively, for the tent-maker of Naishápúr was more at one

with the pilgrim Abdú el Yezdí than the latter supposed when he wrongly condemned Omar as one that prescribed merely sensual pleasures, which must all at last pall upon the voluptuary. For the truth is that the exhortation—Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die—is only the half of Omar's wisdom; the rest seems to me precisely the same as that of the *Kasídab* :

*Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none
but self expect applause ;*

*He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes
and keeps his self-made laws.*

*All other Life is living Death, a world where
none but Phantoms dwell,*

*A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling
of the camel-bell.*

Such a man as this Shakespeare and Rabelais and Goethe would have understood and loved. Such a man Lucretius must surely have envied ; for while he himself had obtained freedom with a great price, Omar was born free, and his struggles had been wrestling with intellectual problems, not sharp pangs and searchings of heart.

A NOTE ON OMAR

Omar was, like Lucretius, a *savant*, trained by the practice of research and disciplined by science; hence he does not shrink from the touch of reality, nor does he cherish illusion for its own sake. Clear-brained and sane, he consoled himself for the rubs of fortune with a stroke of humour instead of seeking satisfaction in bitter scorn and self-destroying contempt. He was too healthy to permit the eternal verities to crush him into wan-hope and gloom.

But Omar was also a poet, and he knew that the Real Life is not wholly intellectual. He had gone through his journey without losing zest. He was at ease in the fellowship of Youth and Mirth and Love, though he saw their frailty. The littleness of Life, clearly as he acknowledged it, could not really poison his enjoyment, but rather enhanced the glow of its fleeting charm. *Timor mortis* troubled poor Dunbar's aching morrows, but could not disturb Omar's morning dreams. He was alive to Opportunity. To-day, if ye will hear his voice! To-day! Will not the future be the better and richer for memories of past pleasure? So surely must the sane man feel.

Those also who would make of Omar a *Sufi*, such as Jilal-ad-din, or a Hedonist, such as Rochester, are as much at fault as those who would make of Rabelais a crusader or a drunkard. Omar had gone beyond empty phrases and passed the marshy reek of mysticism by; he lived far above the haunts of the mere hog-philosophy. His palate was too keen, his senses too exquisite, his brain too healthy and active to allow him to find complete satisfaction in animal pleasures only. These same animal pleasures he does not by any means despise. They are natural, to be enjoyed and fully enjoyed in their seasons, but there are others. Even Mr. Wilkes (a true epicure) leashed together the pleasure of generosity, delight in the contemplation of nature, and the love of woman, as combining to his highest enjoyment. And for Omar the Persian there were many gratifications, and among them those that thrill, and rightly, the bodily senses. He was no despiser of the common joys of mankind, he acknowledged their blessedness. For him, as for Blake, Earth was a beautiful place; like brother Martin, he

loved wine and song and woman. The perpetual miracle of the spring did not appeal to him in vain. The odour of roses came to him as a very breath from heaven. But his paradise was not as simple as Muhammad's.

Toward his fellows he was largely tolerant. He abhorred hypocrisy, but he was not too stern with the hypocrite ; he loathed bigotry, but yet he did not deeply condemn the bigot who yearned to murder him. He revolted openly at the cruelties and tragedies of life, but he did not wholly accuse the Universe that baffled him. A man could never be prevented from doing his duty. He would not allow the Unknowable to confound him, and his humour does not quail before any imaginable thing or being.

There is a frank courage about him ; he dealt with life as with his mathematics. He was no *quietist*. We cannot steer our drifting raft, nor stem the resistless current ; but we have it in our power to behave decently, to share the meagre stock of victuals fairly as long as they last, to take the good and evil as it comes, and even to hope, if we choose to do so, for a fair haven.

Omar has no heaven to offer, no hell to threaten with. His appeal is not to spiritualities, his deity is more *fainéant* than even the gods of Epicurus. To Omar the fair mirage is but a bright reflection, and he will not mistake it for the city that is very far off. He is a plain, downright man, and his "message" is only a friendly whisper to them that care to sit near him, bidding them trust to the real and front life squarely.

So I read Omar, ranging him as to his standpoint with Shakespeare and those who take the same kindly half-ironic dutiful view of life. Rabelais and Whitman are of the company. There are plenty of lines among the best-accredited verses of Omar that seem to me to give just this notion of him, and I do not think it is inconsistent with what is known of his life.

But among the verses that pass under his name are some that can scarcely be reconciled with this view, and these I cannot believe to be his. They belong to another character, to a man who had within him a wittier and a more malicious Heinesque mockery, but a man also capable of ardent mystical religious adoration. Such men

have appeared ere now both in the east and west. One can hardly imagine the agony of earnest piety, that undoubtedly at times thrilled Verlaine, and the impudent, reckless, cruel gaminerie, that Villon often gives way to, coexisting in the same man with the calm science, deep humour, and kindly tolerance of Shakespeare and Rabelais. We know that much heretical verse and much repentant self-reproach expressed in memorable lines were cast by the copyists into the collections they attributed to Omar and mixed up with his genuine verse.

In the quatrains that follow, for instance, there seems to be a distinct discrepancy between that numbered XII, beautiful though the original may be, and the nobler verses that conclude the selection; and XII is not wholly inconsistent with VII and III. Again I (where FitzGerald's rendering is rather restored than altered) is perhaps rather on than by Omar.

The best is Omar's pretty certainly, and the impression of a selection of the best quatrains taken from, say, Mr. Payne's version (where the patient skill of the translator is seeking to render as closely as may be

the original form) will, to my fancy, be that I have attempted to sketch above. The real Omar seems to emerge, and it is the Omar that FitzGerald recalled from limbo and transfigured for us occidentals in his immortal version. The form of his raiment is indeed slightly changed, but the man is little altered. He is visibly a manifest poet of our own race, more Aryan perhaps than Lucretius himself. There is nothing of the Arab about him: he does not raise high debate like the schoolmen of Islam on predestination and the prae-creation of the Quran, nor does he try to rival the Seven titan poets of the clans of the Days of Darkness. He is far closer to us than that high questioner Job, or even that loneliest of pessimists the Preacher in Jerusalem. There is nothing about him of the glittering, often tawdry, geometrical filagree dear to the alien Hindoo. Here is a Hellene beyond the Greek pale, a classic of our own blood, a modern too, albeit he is separated from us by eight centuries' space, and is in name a follower of the Quraish prophet, and in garb a *barbarian*. Nor can one forget that his tongue is, after all, a sister tongue to our own.

It is FitzGerald's great claim to a loftier meed than befits the mere translator, that he felt this close kinship and took care to make his version poetry first and next English, leaving just enough local colour in his reproduction to help his readers' imagination, declining firmly to allow himself to be hampered by too rigorous fidelity to metre or metaphor. Omar is as yet the one Persian poet (besides Hafiz) that an Englishman can comprehend and feel at ease with, and even Hafiz, able as his translators have been, strikes most of us primarily as an oriental and secondly as a poet.

Mr. Greene's Latin version of FitzGerald is worthy of its original, and has a harmonious pomp and a concise felicity proper to the language of Lucretius. One would like to have a version in Aeolic Greek by as good and poetic a scholar. Here surely, as Antarah puts it, there is *a place for a patch*, a purple patch in the long embroidered garment of a western poesy.

As for the ensuing quatrains, they were turned into English on the familiar model from M. Nicolas' and Mr. Justin McCarthy's

versions, for the pleasure of a friend of whose kindness they form but an inadequate acknowledgment. They were first printed in *The Pageant*, 1897, at the instance of its editor, Mr. Gleeson White. They have been impudently misprinted by a pirate in the United States, where the laws as yet permit such dishonest and uncivil dealings. They are now reprinted because, as they have been circulated widely in an incorrect form, they may as well appear in their own shape. They only hope to be considered humble appendices to the rendering of Omar by FitzGerald, for verily, as Hárith sang of Amru long ago :

*He is a king that hath brought all under his
subjection,
Nor is there among them his peer in his gifts.*

Christ Church, Oxford,
March the twentieth, 1901.

QUATRAINS FROM OMAR.

I.

KHAYYÁM, that used to stitch the tents of Thought,
Into Grief's furnace dropt, was burnt to naught ;
The shears of Fate his Life's tent-ropes have cut ;
Yea, Hope's sharp Broker sold him — nor got aught.

II.

The World gains naught that I live here below,
And my Departure will not mar its show ;
No man has told me yet, nor do I know
Why I came here, or *wherefor* hence I go.

III.

The Day is breaking, let us welcome him
With glasses crimson-beaded to the brim ;
And as for Name and Fame and Blame and Shame,
What are they all? — mere Talk and idle Whim.

IV.

Why at the Dawning must the cock still crow ?
It is that by his crowing he may show
That one more Night has slid from out thy Life :
And thou art lying asleep and dost not know.

V.

Life's caravan speeds strangely swift — take care ;
 It is thy youth that's fleeting — Friend, beware ;
 Nor vex thyself for Woe to come, in vain,
 For lo, the Night rolls on and Dawn breaks bare.

VI.

The Spheres that turn have brought no luck to thee,
 What matter how the Years or Seasons flee ?
 Two Days there are to which I pay no heed —
 The Day that's gone, the Day that is to be.

VII.

Above thine head looms Heaven's Bull Parwín ;
 Beneath thy feet a Bull bears Earth unseen ;
 Open the eyes of Knowledge, and behold
 This drove of Asses these two Bulls between.

VIII.

The Rose saith, " I am Joseph's flower, for, lo,
 My Cup is full of Gold." " If this be so,
 Give me another sign," I cried, and She
 Made answer, " Red with gore my Garments show."

IX.

Rose, thou art like unto a Face most fair ;
 Rose, thou art like unto a Ruby rare ;
 Fate, thou art ever changing shape and hue,
 Yet ever hast the same familiar air.

X.

Though the Rose fade, yet are the Thorns our lot ;
Though the Light fail, yet is the Ember hot ;

Though Robe and Priest and Presence all are gone,
The empty Mosque at least we still have got.

XI.

Open the Door ; the Key is Thine alone !
Show me the Path ; only to Thee 'tis known ;

The idle Hands they reach I will not take,
Thine Everlasting Arms shall bear me on.

XII.

O Lord, have mercy on my enslavèd Soul :
Have mercy on my Heart that Griefs control :

Have mercy on my Foot that seeks the Inn :
Have mercy on my Hand that craves the Bowl.

XIII.

Creeds seventy-two among Mankind there be,
Of all these Faiths I choose but Faith in Thee :

Law, Sin, Repentance, all are idle words :
Thou art my Hope. What's all the rest to me ?

XIV.

The Drop of Water wept to leave the Sea,
But the Sea laught and said, " We still are we."

God is within, without, and all around,
And not a hair's-breadth severs Me and Thee.

XV.

Now Thou art hidden, unseen of all that be ;
 Now Thou art full display'd that all may see :
 Being, as Thou art, the Player and the Play,
 And playing for Thine own pleasure, carelessly.

XVI.

In these twin Compass-beams, my Soul, you see
 One Body and two Heads, like You and Me,
 Which wander round one centre circle-wise,
 But at the end in one same point agree.

XVII.

The Heart wherein Love's wick burns clear and well,
 Whether it swing in mosque or shrine or cell,
 If in the Book of Love it be enroll'd,
 Is free from Hope of Heaven or Fear of Hell.

XVIII.

Whether in Heaven or Hell my lot be stay'd,
 A Cup, a Lute, a fair and frolic Maid,
 Within a place of Roses please me now ;
 While on the chance of Heaven thy Life is laid.

XIX.

I lack not hope of Grace, though stain'd by Lust ;
 Like the poor Heathen that in idols trust,
 Woman and Wine I'll worship while I live,
 Nor flinch for Heaven or Hell, since die I must.

XX.

Come, Friend, the cares of this brief life dismiss,
Be merry in thy momentary bliss,
If God were constant in his favour, think,
Thy turn had never come for Cup or Kiss.

XXI.

Let not the World's mass too much on thee weigh,
Nor grieve for them that Death has made his prey ;
Lose not thine Heart save to the Fairest Fair,
Nor lack good Wine, nor fling thy Life away.

XXII.

'Tis well to be of good Report and Trust ;
'Tis ill to make complaint that God's unjust ;
'Tis better to be drunk with good red Wine
Than swollen with Hypocrisy's black Must.

XXIII.

No Shield can save thee from the Shaft of Fate,
Nor to be glorious or rich or great ;
The more I ponder, still the more I see
That Truth is All, naught else has any weight.

XXIV.

Of Duty towards God let Preachers whine,
But do as I command, and Heaven's thine ;
Give freely, slander not, be kindly still,
That done, have thou no fear, and call for Wine !

XXV.

Yea! I drink Wine, and he that's truly wise
Knows that my drinking sins not in God's eyes.

From all Eternity He knew that I
Should drink : if I drank not, His Word were Lies!

XXVI.

Upon the ruined walls of Tūs I saw
Perched on Kai Kawūs' skull a chattering Daw

That croaked, "Where is thy Crown, thy Throne, thy Sword,
Thy Glory, and thy War-horn's blast? Caw! Caw!"

XXVII.

To drink and take thy pleasure with the Fair
Is wiser too than Faith's grey garb to wear;

If all that love or drink to Hell must go,
For a Heaven of hypocrites what soul could care?

XXVIII.

The Sage reviled the Harlot on the way,
"Thou drunken Drab, Lust-roving waif and stray!"

She answered, "Yea, all that I am and more,
But thou, art thou as holy as men say?"

XXIX.

I saw a hermit in a desert cave;
Nor heresy nor faith nor wealth [he'd have]

Nor Creed nor God nor Truth nor Law nor Wit.
In either world where is a man so brave?

LINES AFTER OMAR.

DRINK and be merry, let the bigots yell!
They lose this world : as for the other, well,
Are boon companions and true lovers damned ?
Why then, there'll be brave company in hell.

Surely at Thy command we stand or fall ?
The very wheel of Heaven obeys Thy call.
If I do evil, am I not Thy thrall ?
Whose is the guilt, then ? Thou art Lord of all !

While yet you boast of flesh and blood and bone,
Content you with what Destiny hath done.
Give way before no foe : were it Rustum's self
And were it to Hatim Taj, be bound to none.

What man of woman born from Sin is free ?
None such hath been, and none such shall there be :
If thou repay by ill the ill I do,
What difference is there between Me and Thee ?

They that for learning are the world's elect
Would scale the heights of Heaven by Intellect,
And climb the Firmament to seek God's truth, —
These miss the secret, for their minds are wreckt.

If Heaven deny me bread, I live for Fame :
If I lose Man's respect, I hug my shame.

The cup is brimming with the Crimson Wine,
And he that will not drink, be his the blame !

March, 1899.

FOUR TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH.

THE DAWN SONG BY GERALD OF
BORNELH.

Loquitur Vigilator.—

O KING of Glory! Pure and very Light!
Lord, if it please Thee, God of power and might!
On this my Friend Thy faithful aid bestow
Whom since night fell I have not seen till now:
And soon it will be Dawn.

Fair Friend, whether thou sleep or wake this night,
Sleep no more now, but wake thyself outright;
For in the East I see the Day-star show
That leads the Morn up — well its place I know:
And soon it will be Dawn.

Fair Friend, in this my song to thee I cry,
Sleep no more now, I hear the Bird sing high
That comes thro' the dark Wood to seek the Day,
And I fear lest the Foe should thee betray:
For soon it will be Dawn.

Fair Friend, rise up and to the window hie
And look forth on the Stars that leave the Sky,
And thou shalt know it is the truth I say;
If thou do not, it is thy Loss away:
For soon it will be Dawn.

Fair Friend, since that hour I took leave of thee
I have not slept nor stirred from off my knee,
But prayed alway to God, S. Mary's Son
To give me back my true companion :
And soon it will be Dawn.

Fair Friend, upon the stairs thy charge to me
Was that all sleep I should eschew and flee
And keep good Watch until the Night was done :
But now my Song and Service pass for none :
And soon it will be Dawn.

Respondit Amator.—

Fair sweet Friend, I am in such pleasant stay,
As I could wish there were no Dawn or Day —
For the most gentle Dame that e'er was born
Holds me within her arms, wherefore I scorn
The jealous Foe and Dawn.

“LE CIEL EST PAR-DESSUS LE TOIT.”

FROM PAUL VERLAINE.

THE sky above the high roof-tree
So blue, so calm,
The pine above the high roof-tree
Sways like a palm.

The bell up in the sky you see
So softly rings,
The bird up in the tree you see
So sweetly sings.

O God! O God! a life is here
Of simple quiet:
That gentle murmur all I hear
Of the town's riot.

What hast thou done, thou, lying here,
In ceaseless tears?
What hast thou done, say, thou lying here,
With thy young years?

THE LAST WORDS.

FROM MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

AND if he ever should come back,
What am I to say?
— Tell him that I watch'd for him
All my life away.

And if he should ask me more,
Nor know my face again?
— Speak gently as a sister speaks,
He may be in pain.

If he ask me where you are,
How shall I reply?
— Then give him my golden ring,
Very silently.

And if he should want to know
Why the hall stands bare?
— Then show him the burnt-out lamp
And the door ajar.

And if he should ask me then
How you fell asleep?
— Tell him that I smiled and died.
Do not let him weep.

BALLADE.

FROM THE FRENCH OF PAUL FORT.

THE pretty maid she died, she died, in love-bed as
she lay ;

They took her to the churchyard, all at the break of
day ;

They laid her all alone there, all in her white array ;

They laid her all alone there, a-coffined in the clay ;

And they came back so merrily, all at the dawn of
day ;

A-singing, all so merrily, "*The dog must have his day!*"

The pretty maid is dead, is dead, in love-bed as she
lay :

And they went off a-field to work, as they do every
day.



The Bi Belof

IN this pathetic little diary of the Beata Benvenuta with its postscript by Sister Atalanta, her cousin, we come upon a singularly tender rendition of what supposedly is an imaginary legend.¹ Pervading all that "Vernon Lee" has written dealing with eighteenth-century themes is an atmosphere, whether of tragic or (rarely) joyous import, in perfect keeping with the chosen time and place. Especially is this true of whatever recalls to us the period of Goldoni and Galuppi: songs lapsed into silence — masquerades of love and life "long, long ago at rest."

We therefore confess to a feeling that in this historically non-existent beatification the nuances are delicately worked out to something more than a merely artistic end; there is no more improbability here than in Our Lady's Tumbler — or in many another legend of the child saint in the ages past: Marcel Schwob's *The Children's*

¹ Sister Benvenuta and The Christ Child: An Eighteenth-Century Legend By Vernon Lee. 32mo, cloth. Pp. 80, London, (E. Grant Richards) 1906.

Crusade, *Flaubert's The Legend of St. Julian*, *Hospitaler*, *Fiona Macleod's The Wayfarer*, *De Queiroz's The Sweet Miracle* — *all these being precisely of the same genre.*

One can but think it must have been a great joy to Violet Paget to write down this artless narrative. She has indeed written many beautiful things for us, but the legend of Sister Benvenuta, or so we consider it, is likely to remain one of her most enduring creations. In such work many may be called but few indeed are chosen!

The child-heart in the little nun, had reached out and found that other child-heart which is first and last in Time and Eternity. "The sweet story of old" has many variants but is none the less in every transmutation the same undying story whether from a Catholic or Protestant point of view. That is the sum and substance of all possible legends and it suffices.

SISTER BENVENUTA AND THE CHRIST CHILD
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEGEND

By

VERNON LEE.

To my dear old Friend
EVELYN WIMBUSH,
In return for Embroideries, Stories of
Saints, and much else besides.

Christmas, 1905.

SISTER BENVENUTA AND THE CHRIST CHILD.

AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEGEND.

SOME sixty years ago, and shortly before its total extinction, the illustrious Venetian family of Loredan began taking steps towards the beatification of one of its members, a nun, who had died at Cividale in the year 1740.

The inhabitants of Cividale had indeed waited for no official confirmation of the blessedness of Sister Benvenuta Loredan; and a regular cultus, as well as an appropriate legend, were well known to exist in connexion with her. Indeed, it would appear that the beatification of this young lady (who, during her worldly life, had been the third daughter of Almorò IV Loredan Count of Teolo and Soave, and Fiordispina Badoer, his wife) had become advisable not only in recognition of her saintliness and miracles, but also to direct popular piety into authorized channels, and to prune away sundry fanciful beliefs and practices which had grown up unnoticed. For tactfully conducted ecclesiastical inquiries established

that the Beata Benvenuta, as she was prematurely designated, had become the chief object of devotion to young children and their fond mothers in the town of Cividale.

In this capacity she had usurped the credit, and even part of the legend, of some of the oldest and best accredited saints in the Calendar. Thus it was proved beyond all doubt that the children of Cividale had ceased considering the three holy kings—Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar—as the purveyors of their yearly gifts, and laid out their shoes and stockings for the Beata Benvenuta to fill.

What was even graver, there had come to be attributed to her some of those venerable familiarities with the Infant Christ which are known for a certainty of St. Catherine, St. Anthony of Padua, and (according to certain worshipful hagiographers) of the seraphic St. Francis himself. While, on the other hand, she was credited with personal encounters with the Great Enemy of Mankind, such as are authoritatively ascertained only of St. Anthony, St. Nicholas of Bari, St. Dunstan, St. Theodora, St. Anaximander, St. Rodwald, St. Nilus, and a small

number of well-known celestial champions flourishing in more remote periods of history. To this manifest disorder must be added that the yearly procession in honour of the Beata Benvenuta, so called, was conducted by children, mainly little girls, without any ecclesiastical guidance, and consisted in parading the town in wreaths and fanciful dresses of tinsel and variegated bits of stuff, singing childish songs and, it is even rumoured, taking hands and dancing, and eating certain small dough nuts made for the occasion. A similar kind of hard cake, stuck with toasted almonds, was sold throughout the streets of Cividale on May 15th, the anniversary of the so-called Beata Benvenuta's birth; which cakes were supposed to have the shape of the Infant Saviour in the arms of the young nun above-mentioned. And this day was also celebrated by an unusual display of puppet shows, whose owners claimed the Beata Benvenuta as their heavenly advocate, a statement requiring to be taken with the very greatest circumspection. But the circumstance most characteristic of the whole questionable business, and surely sufficient

to warrant the introduction of supreme ecclesiastical authority, was that (as no one in Cividale could deny) the children were wont to employ in their games a rhyme for the purpose of counting, of which the first line contained the name of Beata Benvenuta Loredan, and the last that of the Devil.

Such were some of the reasons, besides the uncontested holiness of her life, and a respectable number of well-ascertained miraculous cures and deliverances, which rendered it urgent that steps should be taken towards the beatification of Sister Benvenuta Loredan of Cividale.

His Holiness Pope Gregory XVI lent a favourable ear to these reasons and to the commendable desires both of the noble house of Loredan (who defrayed all expenses) and of the few remaining nuns of the Convent of St. Mary of the Rosebush, both legitimately proud of so glorious a member respectively of their temporal and spiritual families.

But after some years of diligent inquiry, and much research into public and private archives, the matter of the beatification of

AND THE CHRIST CHILD

Sister Benvenuta Loredan was allowed to drop, nor ever taken up subsequently. The perusal of the diary of Sister Benvenuta Loredan, contained amongst the documents of the case, may perhaps shed some light both on her real claims to beatification and on the reason why these claims were not officially admitted.

*Convent of St. Mary of the Rosebush of
Cividale in Friuli.*

Day of the Holy Name of Jesus.

January, 1740.

I have been thinking and thinking how dreadfully dull it must be for our dear little Child Christ, always locked up in that Sacristy cupboard, which smells so of old wood and stale incense whenever it is opened. Except from Christmas Eve till Epiphany, when He lies in the manger under the High Altar, between the Ox and the Ass, and one or two great feasts when He is carried in procession, He is always in

that press between the bits of saints' bones in cotton-wool, the spare vestments and the packets of waxlights; and the Sister Sacristan is always so careful to close everything! Once, soon after last Corpus Christi, she had omitted to lock the press, and I seized the opportunity to put a big bunch of damask roses in for the dear Bambino; I watched her take it out some weeks later, hold it at arm's length with a sniff, and throw it into the dust-pan. And then I was glad I had not also put in one of those little round cakes, of fine flour and *vinsanto*, which Sister Rosalba, who is so proud of her uncle the Doge, baked for that holiday, according to a recipe of His Serenity's household.

If only I could get appointed Sacristan! But I am too young, and being lame prevents my getting on to the step-ladders. For all these reasons I have resolved that, being unable to talk freely to the dear Great Little One, I would write down the things which may divert Him, and put the sheets in the big hollow silver arm containing a finger-bone of St. Pantaleo, Bishop of Baalbek, whenever I have an opportunity of getting to that cupboard.

St. Agnes' Day.

I have considered very earnestly, dear little Child Christ, whether it may not be carnal pride to suppose that I can amuse you at all, and whether I ought not to confess it. But our Confessor is a learned man; he has written a big treatise on the language spoken in Paradise before Adam's Disobedience (it seems it was a dialect of Turkish), and makes fine sonnets whenever there is a new nun, all printed on yellow silk, and handed round with the ices; our Confessor already thinks me such a silly person, and would only take snuff impatiently and cry, "Tut, tut! pray for a little wisdom, Sister Benvenuta." And then it is not vaingloriousness, nor a sin, for I do not in the least think I shall tell these things amusingly, with nobility of style, as the Mother Abbess would, or wittily, like old Sister Grimana Emo, who always makes me blush. It is simply that, however dull I am (and I was always a dunce) it will be less dull for the dear Little Great One than living always alone in that cupboard, with no company but the worms in the wood and

these holy bits of bone in cotton-wool under glass bells.

4th Sunday after Epiphany.

It cannot really be sinful vaingloriousness; for Heaven would not have sent me so very soon something quite wonderfully interesting to tell my dear Great Little One. Oh, it's really wonderfully exciting! There is going to be a great entertainment on Shrove Tuesday. All the nobility of the town are invited, and there is to be a puppet show in the Parlour! We have to pretend not to know it until the Mother Superior tells us in Chapter. But we are all talking of nothing else. And so I must tell the Great Little Child Christ.

St. Dorothy's Day.

The showman had a long audience from the Mother Abbess the day before yesterday. They say he asked an extortionate price because this convent is so famous, and the sisters all required to have sixteen

AND THE CHRIST CHILD

quarterings and at least a thousand ducats of dowry. But the Mother Abbess, who is a widow of the house of Morosini, beat him down with great dignity. I caught a glimpse of the showman: he is an ill-favoured person, with a Bolognese accent, a cast in his eye, a red wig, and his stockings badly drawn. But Sister Rosalba, who has much worldly wisdom, says he is not excommunicate, though he looks as if he were. We discussed whether the puppets of an excommunicated person would therefore be excommunicated puppets, and might or not be introduced into a convent. Sister Rosalba said a noble convent had privileges. The Sister Sacristan said that, at any rate, the Mother Superior had treated him with consummate dignity, and had warned him to try no tricks upon her.

St. Scholastica's Day.

Oh, dearest Bambino, if only I could show you the puppets! The man has brought them, against the performance next week, in order to give time for any

changes, in case the Mother Abbess or our reverend Father Confessor should discover something sinful about any of them. The Mother Superior had them all in her private parlour to examine through a magnifying glass. Sister Grimana says our Confessor took exception to some of the ladies showing so much of their bosom; but our Superior, who is a woman of the world, answered that she was astonished that His Reverence did not know that a Venetian lady is allowed by the laws of the Serene Republic to show exactly one-half of her bosom and no more, there being no immodesty in this proceeding. I do not understand much about such things; but it appears the Mother Abbess pointed out that it would be an unwarrantable criticism on the wisdom of the Republic and also on the noble ladies invited to the representation, if the puppets representing the parts of queens, princesses, and heroines had pieces of tissue paper arranged round their shoulders as the Reverend Father had suggested. I do not know about the bodices of the ladies; I only know how beautiful they are, and how I should like to show them to my dear Little

AND THE CHRIST CHILD

Great One. For, after the examination in the Abbess's private parlour, the puppets were all brought back and hung on sorts of towel-horses in the corridor of St. Mary Magdalen, and all we sisters were allowed to look at them. Oh, dearest Bambino, if only I could bring you one or two ! They have wires through their heads and strings to their hands and feet, ending in a big bobbin by which they are hung up. And when you pull the strings their little wooden hands move like forks, and their chins go down and their mouths open ; and their arms and legs fling out and they clatter. That is not the proper way of using them, of course, but I can't do anything else. Sister Rosalba and old Sister Grimana hold them in the right way, with their heels, which are leaded (and some have lovely shoes with rosettes and some embroidered slippers like Turks), firmly against the floor, so that they are erect, and move along hitting the ground, and making wonderful movements with their arms, sometimes even across their back, which cannot be quite right, but, of course, I do not know. Some of them, a terrible Sclavonian, with a sash

full of knives, big horsehair whiskers, and a servant wench, particularly, got their strings entangled, and always would spin round and turn their backs to each other. But there was a Shepherdess and a Hero with a blonde wig and a Roman dress, who were quite easy to manage, and the two sisters made them dance a minuet, Sister Grimana singing in a cracked voice, until Atalanta Badoer, a novice, and my cousin, fetched a lute which had remained over from Sunday's musical Mass, and began to play a *furlana* beautifully. I thought, "Does my Bambino hear the music in His cupboard?" But some of the elder sisters reprimanded her and took the lute away. How I should like to bring the Shepherdess to show my dear Great Little One! I do not really like the puppets representing ladies, though they have lovely skirts of flowered cloth of silver and *andriennes* making their hips stick out, and bodices full of seed pearl, and patches on their cheeks and red paint, just like the real ladies who used to come and drink chocolate with my mother and my aunts. And some of them have light cloaks and big hats tied with black kerchiefs, and white

masks like snouts, just like the ladies I used to see during carnival on the big staircase at Venice, with their servant cavaliers ; and those white snouts and black kerchiefs, and the way they swayed in their great hoops covered with dominoes, used to frighten me and make me cry. I would not show you any of those, dearest Little Great One ; nor the wicked Sclavonians and Turks, nor the Ogre, nor the horrid old Doctor with the long red nose, nor the Harlequin striped like a villainous snake, nor even the Spaniard, Don Matamoros, in black slashed clothes and boots, with whiskers on end and a mouth that would swallow you. But I would show you the kind, gentle Blackamoor King, and the beautiful Hero in Roman costume and a blonde wig, who looks as if he were singing "Mio Ben !" and "Amor Mio," like the famous soprano I was carried to hear at the opera just before I took the veil. But above all, I would show my Bambino that lovely, modest Shepherdess, and try to make her dance for him ! Oh, I shall commit a sin some day, and steal the cupboard key, and creep out to show that Shepherdess to my Bambino !

*St. Juliana's Day.**February 16th.*

I am a great simpleton. When we were looking again at the puppets to-day (for we contrive, at least a few of us, to look at them on their towel-horses every day) there was one which made me burst out laughing, till I nearly cried; and it was very foolish and wrong, as Sister Grimana told me, for I knew the whole time that puppet represented the Devil. I have never been afraid of the Devil, I who am afraid of so many things (for instance, of those people in dominoes and hats tied with black kerchiefs and white snouty masks, who used to come and play cards and drink Samos wine at my father's house). I know it is wrong, and I have often prayed that I might learn to fear the Evil One, but I never could, and all the pictures of him, and the things they tell (and which we read in the *Spicilegium Sanctorum*) have always made me laugh. And so from foolishness and a bad heart, I burst out laughing at this Puppet-Devil; and it was very wicked. But oh, dear Bambino, you would have laughed also!

St. Cunegunda's Day.

The Mother Abbess said there must be less fooling about with puppets in the Convent of St. Mary of the Rosebush; so we have all become very busy, and I have barely time to write to my dearest Bambino. This convent is so noble, only patricians of the Serene Republic and Princes and Counts of the Holy Roman Empire being able to propose their daughters, that we are allowed to do no useful work, there being lay sisters for that purpose. I am often sorry (for I have not a noble mind befitting my birth, as my nurses often complained) it should be so. I should like to shell peas and wash rice and slice tomatoes in the kitchen. I have often envied the lay sisters turning up the garden mould, which smells so good, and pruning and planting while we walk round the cloisters: and I feel that my unskilful fingers would be happier sewing woollen shifts of winters for the poor women and children, than embroidering, which I do so badly! But I suppose this is all mere wicked spirit

of indiscipline and grumbling (the sin of *Accidia* which our Confessor talks about), and I pray hard to have a more humble and thankful heart. Be this as it may, we sisters have all been very busy; some making candied peel and rosolios in the Mother Abbess's silver saucepans; others sewing altar cloths, embroidering, making lace, and making all manner of ingenious and pious ornaments and devices out of plaited straws, strips of coloured and gilt paper and variegated beads. I have been among those who have the honour of manufacturing the pleated and crinkled and gauffred linen for His Eminence the Patriarch's surplices. Here, again, I have committed a little sin of arrogance, thinking that His Eminence had quite surplices enough and to spare, and wishing I could give some of this folded lawn, looking like sea foam or the blossoms on our almond trees, to my dear Little Great One, so chilly in that Sacristy cupboard, with only a hard purple and gold sash tickling His poor little middle.

St. Frances' Day.

I really must tell you, dear Little Great One, about the puppet representing the Devil, because if I can make you smile I shall feel it is not mere wickedness always to want to laugh whenever I see or even think of that puppet. He is labelled *Beelzebubb Satanasso, Prince of all Devils*, and is hung up, by the hook in the bobbin above his head, on the clothes-horse in the Corridor of St. Eusebius, under a picture by Sebastian Ricci, representing the martyrdom of St. Agatha; the puppets on either side of him are labelled "Pulcinella" and "Sophonisba." But actually next to him, so as to look as if they were all of one piece, is a very terrible monster labelled "Basilisk." This Devil wears a black dressing-gown fastened with a pale blue scarf; he has an ebony wand in his hand, and his legs, where the robe ends, are of ebony also, like those of a horse, with beautiful carved hoofs. He has also got long ears and little scarlet horns. He seems to have the other hand on the Basilisk, and ought to be very frightening—

or, rather, I ought to be very frightened by him! For it is dreadful to have hoofs and horns like that, and a hand on a dragon, and be labelled "Beelzebubb Satanasso, Prince of all Devils." But he makes me laugh, dearest Bambino, laugh, and only laugh; and I am sure you would laugh also, although you are the Verb Incarnate and all the great things we learned in the Catechism. How I wish you could see him, or I could tell you! He has a wide face, bearded like a Capuchin, with black goggle eyes; and the eyes seem starting out to understand something he can't; and the mouth with the beard round it is gaping also to understand what he can't, and his whole face is puckered trying to make out what's wanted. He reminds me of my brother's tutor, into whose bed (he was a priest of the Oratory) the bad boys used to put hedgehogs, and he would prick himself, and cry out all in Latin. Only I was sorry for the tutor; and I am not a bit sorry for the Devil, but only amused at his being all stiff and agape with his responsibilities—his responsibilities of being the Devil. Oh, dearest Bambino, what fun it would be if you and I could

only play him a thorough good trick ! It wouldn't be unkind like the hedgehogs in the Reverendo's bed, because you see he has hoofs and horns, and he *is* the Devil. How I wish I had a better memory and were less of a dunce ! I should like to remember some of the tricks which the Holy Fathers in the Desert, and the other glorious ones in the Golden Legend, played upon him — not on the puppet, of course, I mean.

Ash Wednesday, 1740.

The performance is over. It was the story of Judith ; how she slew Holophernes and delivered her people, written in Alexandrine verses by our Reverend Father Confessor, called Corydon Melpomeneus among the Arcadian Shepherds. The head of Holophernes really came off, and quantities of red Berlin wool out of it, most naturally and terribly. There was a Triumph of Judith, dressed like the Parisian fashion doll near the Clock Tower in Venice ; with

a gold car, a transparency, and Time appearing with his scythe and Religion out of clouds, to sing a compliment to our Reverend Mother Abbess and the illustrious house of Morosini (including Morosini Peloponnesiacus of undying memory), and there was a dance of Turks, very elegant, and a most diverting scene after Holophernes's death between the servant wench of Judith and Harlequin his valet. The puppets were like alive, hitting the floor with their feet, snapping through the middle when they bowed, and striking out their arms and letting down their jaws with a click in the most life-like way, and talking in wonderful voices like bagpipes and Jews'-harps. And there was an immense company of noble ladies and cavaliers, and prelates and monks, and officers, and his Excellency the Proveditor of the Republic, and the Head Spy, and ices and sherbet and chocolate, and card-tables set out later for the nobility, and at least one thousand waxlights in the Murano chandeliers, usually kept for the sepulchres on Maunday Thursday. And when it was over there was a free fight between the chair-carriers of the Patriarch's

niece and the Bravoes of His Excellency the Count of Gradisca, and a man was left for dead, and the police put a cobbler on the rack next day in order to obtain information and do justice.

We sisters were all behind a gilded grating, and, as the youngest, I sat with the novices, and was unable to constrain them to a religious demeanour or to prevent their pelting their brothers and cousins with maccaroons. I ought to have enjoyed it, and I did nothing but reproach myself bitterly for my ingratitude towards Providence and our Mother Superior, who allowed me to be present at so noble and delicious an entertainment; whereas I was filled only with bitterness and a wish to put a jug of water on the top of the Sister Sacristan's door, so that she should be cruelly soused and frightened, and made to shriek ridiculously when she went back to her cell. For I had laid a plot, which was certainly no sin (nor shall I confess it on any account), to steal the key of that cupboard and take out my dear little Child Christ, and hide Him in a cardboard vase with artificial roses just opposite the stage, so that He might

enjoy the performance. And the Sister Sacristan double-locked the cupboard after Matins, and counted the keys, and hung the bunch at her waist with a most defiant look at me. And I hate her, and feel sure she will never go to Heaven, because of her arrogance and her unkindness to my dear Holy Bambino.

St. Praxed's Day.

I fear I am letting myself go to the deadly sin of hatred and uncharitableness; but how is it possible not to hate the Sister Sacristan and think she looks like a cock, when she loses no opportunity of being unkind to my dear little Child Christ, who, after all, is the King of Heaven, and deserving of consideration even from a Venetian noble. The way of it is this: Our Mother Abbess, fearing that the novices and younger sisters should have become a little worldly over that puppet show and all the ladies and cavaliers who were present, has ordered that the entire convent should give four hours daily, between Matins and Vespers,

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to pious work, fit to nourish religious thoughts and conversation full of compunction. All the reliquaries are to be furbished with plate powder and the holy relics to have their cotton-wool and little ribbons renewed before Christmas. It is a long piece of work, for the bits of bone are brittle and so small that they get lost among the heaps of wadding and the bobbins of ribbon on the work-table. Also, such sisters as are skilful workwomen are to mend the dresses of the various sacred images and put aside such of their lace and embroidery as will take careful repairs. All the various Madonnas have been taken down and their wardrobes examined; the Mother Abbess has been very angry at finding so much moth; moreover, the numbers of shoes and stockings and lace pocket-handkerchiefs were found by no means complete, and some of the men who work in the garden gravely suspected and handed over to the Holy Office. My cousin Badoer, the most unruly of the novices, says that it's the continuation of the puppet show in the Mother Abbess's head; whereupon I have exhorted her to greater piety of thought,

but could not, like the sinful dunce I am, refrain from laughing. Of course my thought leapt at once to my dear Great Little One, in that damp, musty cupboard, with nothing but a prickly crimson and gold sash round his middle. Knowing our Mother Abbess favourably inclined to me (partly on account of my lameness, and partly on account of our family reaching to the beginnings of the Serene Republic, and issuing originally from Lars Porsenna, King of Rome), I ventured to suggest the fittingness of preparing for Him a little coat of soft silk over fine linen against the moment of His exposure at Christmas in that draughty manger. Our Mother Abbess looked at me long, smiled, and even pinched my cheek, saying, "Truly our Sister Benvenuta Loredan was made to be the nursery-maid of Heaven." But at that moment, just as she was going to give permission, who should come in but (oh, hatred is sinful, but I do hate her!) the Sister Sacristan, who immediately poured cold water on my proposal; said that it would be taking time and money from re-dressing the skeleton of St. Prosdocimus, which was a most credit-

able relic, with real diamond loops in his eye-holes, and ought really to be made fit to exhibit to pious veneration. And added that the Bambino never had had any clothes on, that the sash even was a concession to modesty, but that no one had ever heard of His wanting to be dressed; the proposal being new-fangled and (did it not come from a sister notoriously prayed for as a simpleton) almost such as to suggest dangerous heresies. So the Abbess turned to me, wagging her ringed finger and saying, "Fie, fie, Sister Benvenuta, the Sacred Bambino is not your *Cavalier Servant* that you should wish to cover Him with velvet and gold lace;" and turned to inquire how many fat carp had been taken to the kitchen for the dinner offered to Monsignor the Eleemosynary of Saint Patrick.

St. Mary of the Snows.

5th August.

But my dearest Bambino *shall* have His little coat; and one softer, warmer, and more gallant than any which the Sister Sacristan can stick upon the skeleton, with

the diamond hoops for eyes, of her St. Prosdoscimus! I have been sorely assailed by bitterness and despair these last weeks. I have bribed the lay sister to buy me silk and gold thread, and fine lawn; and every night have sat upon my bed in my little white cell, and tried to make my dear Little Great One's coat. But whenever I begin, the horrid eyes, the look of a cock of the Sister Sacristan seem to be upon me. The scissors tremble in my hand; I cut and chop at random into the stuff; the back and front never, never have anything to say to one another, and as to the sleeves—! Then I borrowed a little shift of one of the gardener's children, and cut against that. No matter how awkward the shape. My Bambino will forgive that, even if it look more fit for a little bear than Him. For it shall be covered with scrolleries and devices like the Saints' dresses in the old pictures on gold ground in our chapel, all telling the glory of the Bambino in verse and in symbols—fishes and suns and moons, and little daisies and rabbits running, and birds pecking. And every fold will be stitched with a little throb of my loving heart.

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St. Ursula's Day.

Oh foolish and vainglorious little Sister Benvenuta! How is thy pride fallen! My fingers, in these chilly autumn nights, are numb. The needle goes into the stuff crooked and comes out where least expected; the stitches are sometimes wide, like matting, and sometimes all climbing over each other. And the thread gets into knots; and then the needle unthreads, and I crane over my candle, holding the stiffened thread against the eye; and it is in the eye, and I push; and behold it runs alongside the needle and will have nothing to do with it. And why did people ever invent thimbles? Oh Holy Martha, patroness of all good housewives, why was I taught to dance minuets, and curtsy, and sing madrigals to the spinet, and say, "Oui, Monsieur," "Votre servante, Madame," and never, never taught to sew?

St. Crescens, Virgin and Martyr.

I shall not put these sheets into the silver arm in the Sacristy cupboard. My dearest

Little One shall read them, but only later, when He shall have got His coat, that He may rejoice at it and at the price I have paid for it. Yes, beloved Bambino, a greater price than the silver florins and gold ducats, the sequins and doubloons which have ever paid for the silk and satin, and lace and embroidery of any Madonna or Saint in Christendom. The only price worthy of being paid to please Him: the price of a soul, very foolish and simple no doubt, but full as a grape is of sweetness, or a rose of perfume, of unmixed love and devotion.

1st Sunday in Advent.

They must have mislaid that one after the puppet show, and it has remained behind, forgotten in some corner. Or else . . . I was forgetting that there are words always heard, at whatsoever distance, and which the Evil One answers almost before they are spoken. Anyhow, I felt a sudden draught, there was an odd little noise against the flags of my cell, a clatter, and a series of short, sharp thumps, as when the Mother

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Abbess crosses the cloisters leaning on her Malacca cane : something that made my heart leap and stop, and my forehead become moist and cold. And when I turned from my praying stool, there he was, in the mixed light, bright and yet sickly, of my taper and of the full moon. He seemed, somehow, bigger—as big as myself; but otherwise just the same. The same black dressing-gown, girt round with a pale blue scarf, with the thin, straight horse's legs and neat ebony hoofs where it ended; the same Capuchin's beard, and long ears and little red horns, and just the same expression, rigid, goggle, agape, and very anxious to understand what it was all about and do whatever was expected. He bent his body in two with a bow, touching the floor with his hand like a fork (the other on his breast); he let his articulated underjaw down with an uncertain jerk, leaving a great round mouth with a tongue in it, and prepared to speak. I remember noticing the time that passed between the dropping of the jaw and his speech; also saying to myself, "I would have arranged his eyes to roll from side to side," but I cannot tell

whether or not he had any wires and strings about him. I laughed; but as I did so I felt my breath quite cold, and my cut hair, under my cap, prick and grow stiff. It seemed endless till he spoke, and when he did, with a Jews'-harp voice like a mask's, and called me by my name, I felt suddenly relieved, my heart released and quite calm. He asked me whether I knew who he was, and pointed to a label over his shoulder, with written on it: "Beelzebubb Satanasso, Prince of all Devils." He seemed rather hard of understanding and given to unnecessary explanations and provisos, but uncommon civil spoken, and used a number of very long words, of which he declared the meaning as he went along. He wanted to know the exact measurements, according to the new principles of cutting out mentioned in the *Lady's Encyclopædia of Useful Knowledge*; and was very particular whether the saint in the picture who had on the model of the coat was the second or third saint on the right-hand corner counting from the middle, although I had said he was red-haired and wore green boots (which he wouldn't take heed of), and then whether

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the picture was on the left of the altar, although I repeated it represented the Magi. Also fumbled a long time to find the place where I was to sign my name on the parchment, and worried lest I should begin it too large and cramp the last syllable ; he apologised for making me prick my finger, as if one had never pricked one's finger before, and said, when it was done, " My dear young lady," and forgot the rest. He pulled up his jaw with a snap, bent his body again in two, clattered his arms, and as he vanished with a series of little knocks, there was again a cold draught. This morning Sister Rosalba, coming to my cell, asked why I had dropped sulphur into my hand brazier, whether against moth.

I never crossed myself nor ejaculated any form of exorcism, because, you see, I had told him to come, and it was a piece of business.

Christmas Eve, 1740.

For the first time so far as I can recollect, I have been thinking about my own life, living through bits of it all at once, as the

old lay sister says she did when she fell into the river Natisone and thought to be drowned. And since I have not written for so long to my dear Great Little One (though I scarce know why) I will tell Him what manner of little girl I was, and how I came to love Him more than everything.

Of course I was going to be a nun from the first, because our family possesses a benefice in this noble convent ; and of us three sisters I was the youngest, and a little lame. Our parents were very wise and virtuous, and ordered it so ; just as they settled that one of my brothers was to marry and carry on our illustrious name, and the others to be a Monsignor and a Knight of Malta. When we were taken to the great villa by the Brenta, I was put to lie by myself in a big room, all hung round with coloured prints of nuns of various orders, and with an alcove representing the grotto of a holy anchorite, full of owls, and death's heads, and allegorical figures, most beautifully made of cardboard among plaster rocks. When I was little it used sometimes to frighten me to see those pious figures at dawn, and to know that behind my bed was

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a window, with a curtain one could draw, looking down into the chapel where many of my ancestors lie buried. I often cried and sobbed from fear, but the servant wenches said it would give me a vocation. And no doubt they were right, for I was an uncommon worldly little girl, greatly addicted to playing about in the gardens, and rolling on the grass, and smelling flowers ; and loved to see the barges sailing in front of the terrace, and peacocks strutting and pigeons cooing ; and my mother's beautiful dresses, and the paint and patches on her face, when her maid led two or three of us to her of a forenoon, while she was having her hair powdered and curled, with a black page bringing her chocolate, and her serving cavalier taking snuff alongside of her mirror ; and merchants and Jews bringing her embroideries and jewels to buy ; and a monkey perched on her shoulder, which frightened me, for it screamed and snatched at me.

And when I was three or four years old, I was consecrated to the Mother of God ; and I had a little dress like a nun's, black and white, with a rosary and cap to my size ;

and there was one for every day and one for Sundays, and a new one for every Ascension Feast and every Christmas to do honour to our illustrious family. But my sisters wore ragged lace night-clothes of my mother's, cut to their size, except when they were shown to company ; and then they had beautiful embroidered bodices and farthingales over hoops, and pearls and artificial flowers. I used to see my father once a week, and was much frightened of him, because he was so noble and just. And when he received me he had a handkerchief like a turban round his head, and horn spectacles on his nose, and a black chin, and he was usually making gold with an astrologer, and putting devils in retorts, though I do not now believe that was true. For when he went out in his gondola he had a black domino and a half-mask like every one else ; and when there was gala in our palace at Venice, he stood at the head of the stairs in silk robes like a peony, and a big white peruke, and he smiled.

I was taught with my sisters to dance and play the spinet a little, and talk French ; and I taught myself to read — beyond mere

spelling like the others — because I wanted to read the beautiful legends and prayers on the back of the pictures of saints which the wandering Capuchins, and the priest who said Mass in our chapel, used to give to us children. And there were blue hills beyond the tree-tops by the Brenta; and a strip of sea shining, with yellow sails moving between towers and cupolas, from the place where they dried the linen on our roof at Venice. And I was a very happy little girl, and thanked Heaven for such wise, good parents. But what made me happiest was the picture over the altar of our chapel; and whensoever my serving wench wanted to talk to the gondoliers (which our house-keeper had forbidden) she used to take me into the chapel, help me to climb on to the altar, and leave me there for hours, knowing I should be quite quiet and want no dinner. The picture was the most beautiful picture in the world. It was divided by columns, with garlands of fruit about them; and in the middle, on a ground of gold, all divided into rows and all variegated with russet and orange, like the sunset, was the Madonna's throne, with the Madonna on it, a beautiful

lady, though not so beautifully dressed as my mother, and with no paint on her face, and not showing her teeth in a smile. And on the steps of her throne were little angels crowned with flowers, some playing pipes and lutes, some bringing fruit and flowers, and a little bullfinch with red feathers, just like those my brothers snared with lime. And on the Virgin's knee who should be lying, asleep, fast asleep, but You — You, my dearest Great Little One — quite small and naked, with fat little limbs and red little mouth, drowsy from sucking. The Virgin bent over You, praying; the angels brought You apples and sang You lullabies; the little bird held a cherry in its beak ready to carry to You when You opened Your eye-peeps. The whole of Paradise waited for You to awake and smile; and I sat and waited also, perched on the altar, till it was too dark to see anything save the glimmering gold.

I did not know what I waited for; nor did I know when I was in the convent, a novice; nor even after I had taken the veil. I did not know what I waited for, for years and years, and yet the waiting made me as

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happy as the angels and the little bird. I did not know what it was I was waiting for till that terrible last week. But now I know; and am happy once more in my waiting. I am waiting for You to awake, my Little Great One, and stretch out Your arms, and step upon my knees, and put Your little mouth to my cheek, and fill my embrace and my soul with unspeakable glory.

*Postscript by Sister Atalanta Badoer, of the
Convent of St. Mary of the Rosebush at
Cividale in Friuli.*

May 15th, 1785.

It was I who saved from destruction the diary of my cousin and dear sister in Christ, Sister Benvenuta Loredan. I had watched her putting papers into the silver reliquary, shaped like an arm, and removed them from that place and hid them in my cell, lest they should fall into the hands of the Sister

Sacristan. In accordance with my vow of obedience I later showed some of these papers to the Mother Abbess, who, after a few glances, bade me take and destroy them, as showing (what indeed she had always thought) that Sister Benvenuta had been half-witted, and no credit either to our illustrious convent or to the noble family of Loredan, although there was no denying that she had died in seeming odour of sanctity. But finding myself unable to share the view of our mother, although only a novice and fifteen years of age, I kept the aforesaid papers, feeling sure that they would one day redound to the glory of God and of that blessed one my cousin. And as this expectation has indeed come true, and the holiness and miracles of Sister Benvenuta have filled the city of Cividale and the world with pious wonder even in this our impious century, I have carefully put together those papers of her writing, and desire, before following her into happier realms, to add a few words of what I witnessed now forty-five years ago, at the demise of Sister Benvenuta Loredan, on Christmas Eve of the year of grace seven-

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teen hundred and forty, the noble Giustina Morosini Valmarana being Abbess of our convent.

I was at the time fifteen years of age, and in the first year of my noviciate. My cousin was five years my elder, and had been four years a nun. Despite her illustrious birth and her many virtues, she was but little esteemed in our convent, being accounted a simpleton and little better than a child. But among us novices there prevailed a different opinion, owing to her great gentleness and loving kindness towards us in moments of home-sickness and youthful melancholy; and her pleasant humours and fancies, in which indeed she resembled a child, greatly loving music and such tales as nurses repeat, and flowers and small animals, even to the point of taming lizards and mice. And particularly did we love her for her especial devotion to the Child Christ, although she spoke but little thereof, being persuaded that she was a simpleton, and having no inkling of her own grace and holiness. It so happened that my vocation was but tardy in showing itself, and that being but fifteen years old I was often

unhappy at the thought of abandoning the world, and very lonely in the sense of my rebellion and unworthiness. Then it was that my cousin, the Blessed Benvenuta, would take and console me with loving kindness and discourses of the love of God; and hers were the only consolations my rebellious heart could endure. And a familiarity grew up between us, or, at least, on my part, for my cousin never spoke of herself, and gave rather than took kindness.

This being the case, it so happened that on Christmas Eve of the year of grace 1740, when we had all descended into the chapter room to proceed to the Mass of Midnight, the Mother Abbess, perceiving that Sister Benvenuta Loredan was missing from amongst the sisters, despatched me, as her cousin and the youngest novice, to seek her in her cell, lest any sudden ailment should have overcome her. For it had been a matter of common talk that, for the last weeks, this sister had grown thin, pale, and her eyes taken a very strange look, whereupon it was supposed (and our Abbess had even remonstrated with her) that she had undertaken some special penance, although

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she always denied it. While, therefore, the whole convent, headed by our Abbess *in Pontificalibus* (for she was mitred and a Princess of the Empire), proceeded in solemn procession to the illuminated chapel, I ran upstairs to the cell of Sister Benvenuta Loredan. It was at the end of a long corridor; and as I advanced, I noticed a very brilliant light streaming from under the door. It seemed to me also that I heard voices and sounds, which filled me with astonishment. I stopped and knocked, calling on Sister Benvenuta, but getting no answer. Meanwhile, those sounds were quite clear and unmistakable, and were, in fact, such as mothers and nurses make while rocking and embracing young children, and broken with loving exclamations and kissings. I bethought me that our Mother Abbess had always said that Sister Benvenuta was a simpleton and mad; but somehow these sounds did not move me to ridicule or anger, but, on the contrary, filled me with a loving awe such as I have never felt and find no words to describe, so that with difficulty I resisted the impulse to prostrate myself before that door, streaming in every

chink with light, as before some holy mystery. However, bethinking myself of my duty, I knocked again and in vain; and then very gently lifted the latch and opened the door. But I immediately fell on my knees on the threshold, unable to stir or even to utter a sound for the wonder and glory of what met my poor sinner's eyes. The cell was streaming with light, as of hundreds of tapers; and in the midst of it, the centre of this fountain of radiance, was seated Sister Benvenuta, and on her knees, erect, stood no other but the Child Christ. He had a little naked foot on each of her knees, and was craning His little bare body to reach her face, and seeking to throw His little arms round her neck, and to raise His little mouth to hers. And the Blessed Benvenuta clasped Him most gently, as if fearing to crush His small limbs; and they kissed and uttered sounds which were not human words, but like those of doves, and full of divine significance. Now when I saw this sight and heard these sounds, my knees were loosened; I dropped silently on the ground, my eyes blinded by glory, my lips vainly trying to pray; time seemed come to

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a stand-still. Then suddenly I felt myself touched and made to rise, and understood that the Mother Abbess had sent some other sisters to inquire after Sister Benvenuta and me.

The great light had faded, and the cell was lit only by a candle on the praying desk ; but there seemed to me (and to those sisters whom I inquired of) as if there lingered a faint radiance in the air, together with strange sounds as of distant lutes and viol d'amors, and a marvellous fragrance as of damask roses and big white lilies in the sun. Sister Benvenuta was seated as I had seen her, holding clasped to her the waxen image of the Little Saviour from out of the Sacristy ; and a beautiful garment, of threads of gold and silver interwoven, had slipped to her feet and lay there. And Sister Benvenuta's mouth and eyes were open with rapture. And she was stone dead and already cold. What no one could understand was that near the cell's window, on the floor, lay one of the puppets of a puppet show that had performed in our convent some months before, a bearded and horned figure, with hoofs, labelled "Beelzebubb Satanasso."

SISTER BENVENUTA

And its wires were wrenched and twisted,
its articulated jaw crushed to bits, and its
garments singed all round it.

*[End of the Postscript by Sister Atalanta
Badoer, at that time a novice in the Con-
vent of St. Mary of the Rosebush, and
cousin of the Blessed Benvenuta Loredan.]*



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